The Prophetic Prospects of the Jews

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FAIRBAIRN vs. FAIRBAIRN

BY

REV. PATRICK FAIRBAIRN

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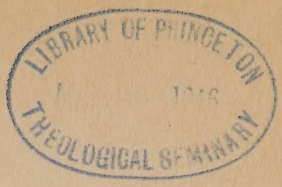

The Prophetic Prospects of the Jews

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REV. PATRICK FAIRBAIRN

With Introduction by the

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INTRODUCTION

IN the year 1840, there was published at Glasgow, Scotland, a book entitled: "A Course of Lectures on the Jews." It was the result of action taken by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, in appointing a large committee to promote missionary work among the Jews. To assist in arousing public interest, this course of lectures was given by the ministers of the city of Glasgow.

Among the names of the lecturers appears that of the Rev. Patrick Fairbairn, pastor of Bridgeton Parish, then less than thirty-five years of age. The title of his lecture is: "The Future Prospects of the Jews," and in it he takes very strong ground in favor of a literal interpretation of the prophecies that relate to their return to the land of Canaan. He sustains this position by numerous citations from the Holy Scriptures, and by very clear and powerful reasoning, so that the ordinary reader is apt to find him exceedingly convincing.

About twenty-five years later, this same Patrick Fairbairn published a book on prophecy, usually referred to as "Fairbairn on Prophecy," in which he also has a chapter discussing this very subject, under the title: "The Prophetical Future of the Jewish People." It will be found on pages 241-286 of that work. In this chapter he takes precisely the contrary position, showing that the prophecies are not to be literally understood, but that everything promised to the people of Israel was promised to the people of God, and that believers in Christ being now that people, the entire Old Testament, with all its prophecies and promises, must be understood as typical of spiritual blessings to be realized in Christ. He looks forward, indeed, to the conversion of Israel, but not to its national restoration. This argument, also, is remarkably clear and convincing.

Since this important subject is so well discussed by this famous and learned Bible student, and since it is one of the essential elements in the millenial problem, that is arousing no little interest among our churches in these days, it is

hoped that it will be found interesting and profitable to hear the arguments of FAIRBAIRN VS. FAIRBAIRN, *and therefore the two papers are here published side by side. The controversy is thus lifted above all local and personal considerations. If the reader is not satisfied with the views of the young pastor of Bridgeton Parish, he may find them conclusively answered by the professor of the Free Church College. If, on the other hand, he thinks that much learning has driven Professor Fairbairn mad, in his interpretation of Scripture, he may take comfort in the reasoning of the same Fairbairn before age and learning had corrupted the simplicity of his vision in the mysteries of the word of God. Here are both views before you; you can take your choice. Here, also, the words of the apostle are applicable: "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."*

The reader is earnestly counselled to read both lectures twice. The first will be altogether too convincing unless the second is also understood: if it is read after that second lecture has been mastered, the citations will appear in an

altogether different light. On the other hand, if one accepts the reasoning of the second lecture, he should at least do it with all the weighty considerations of the first clearly in mind. After reading both twice, let him make his own decision, and give himself a clear reason for doing so. It may be that he will find himself in the position of Dr. Hepp, of Amsterdam, who, during his recent trip in America, was asked whether, in his judgment, the prophecies required the national restoration of the Jews in Palestine, and replied, "Ik weet het niet, ik weet het niet." (I do not know, indeed, I do not know.)

The Dr. Patrick Fairbairn whose discussions are presented here was one of the most famous theologians of Scotland, and of the Protestant world, during the nineteenth century. He was born in 1805 and died in 1874, having served the church as preacher and theological professor for forty-eight years. He was a great student of German, and translated more than one great German theological work into English. He edited the "Imperial Bible Dictionary," published in

1867. Among his most famous works are "Fairbairn on Prophecy," "The Typology of Scripture," "Hermeneutical Manual," "Ezekiel and the Book of His Prophecy," "Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles," and "Pastoral Theology." Scarcely any other writer of the nineteenth century is his equal for fulness of knowledge and depth of insight with respect to the prophetical scriptures.

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Holland, Michigan.
June 27th, 1930.

Seed of Abraham (1950)

PART I

FUTURE PROSPECTS OF THE JEWS—RESTORATION TO THEIR OWN LAND—UNIVERSAL CONVERSION TO THE FAITH OF CHRIST

Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.—Isaiah lxii. 4.

WE have now arrived at a very interesting and important—if I should say *the most* interesting and important subject of inquiry connected with the present series of lectures, I should not certainly exceed my own apprehension of its nature, though I do but the more deeply feel my own inadequacy to do it justice. If, however, a sincere and solemn conviction of the soundness of the views, which

Note.—Delivered as one of a course of twelve lectures, at Glasgow, Scotland, under the auspices of a Committee of the General Assembly, in the winter of 1838-39, by the Rev. Patrick Fairbairn, Minister of Bridgeton Parish, Glasgow. The entire course was published under the title: "Lectures on the Jews," by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia, U. S. A., in 1840.

are now about to be unfolded, as fully authorized by the word of prophecy—if the frequent and not inattentive perusal of this word of prophecy itself, aided by the researches of those, who have brought the most of learning and sobriety of judgment to bear upon the subject, and guided by a simple desire to ascertain the outlines of coming events, as these have been traced by the *Spirit* of prophecy, who moved the holy men of old to speak the things, which were to be fulfilled in the latter days—if these qualifications may bespeak a favourable audience, I may not hesitate to claim from you, in behalf of what is now to be advanced, a patient and attentive hearing. And may the Spirit himself grant, that our inquiry shall be so conducted, as neither to add to, nor detract from the meaning, which he designed that portion of the prophetic volume, which is to pass under our present review, to convey to the church of Christ.

The subject on which we enter, embraces the *future prospects* of the Jews, and consequently leads us into that department of prophecy,

which remains yet to be fulfilled. The very name of unfulfilled prophecy, we are aware, suggests to many persons the idea of a vague and shadowy region, where all is dim and uncertain, and nothing to be ascertained beyond the general character of certain events likely to befall the church or the world at large. *We* hold very different views, however, of the prophetic record, and hope to make it plain to you before we close, that there is at least one class of events yet to be fulfilled, which we may as certainly gather from the word of prophecy, as we can assure ourselves of any events which have already taken place, that they were the accomplishment of predictions, which at some former period stood in the rank of unfulfilled prophecy. In proceeding to make this out to your conviction, there is just one postulate, or principle of interpretation, which we need to lay down for our direction, while endeavouring to read out of the word of prophecy the future history of God's ancient people, and *that* so very reasonable, so readily commending itself to every intelligent mind, that no one, we think, can hesi-

tate for a moment to assent to it. The principle we allude to is, that those portions of prophecy, which have already been fulfilled in the history of the Jewish people, are to be taken as our surest guide for determining the meaning of those other portions, which remain yet to be fulfilled—so that if in the one part the fulfilment that has taken place be unquestionably a literal one, we must look for a literal fulfilment in the other also; or if, through means of a figure, an event of a certain description was in the earlier part of it clearly predicted concerning them, by a change afterwards introduced into that figure, we are to look only for a corresponding change in their condition, in process of time to be developed, not for an event, in which they have no peculiar or special interest at all.

It were surely to confound all language, and to render the word of God the most inexplicable of writings, to say that one part of a prediction is to be taken in the literal acceptation of its words, and the other converted into allegory; or that the first portion of a figurative description is to be understood of one subject, and the

second to be held as referring to another substantially different. If, then, in reading the prophecies, which have been put on record concerning God's ancient people, I find it predicted in terms the most express, that they were to be cast off from being the people of God, torn from their native land, dispersed among all nations, though still preserved separate, treated with the greatest contumely and reproach—and if on searching into history, I also find, that the whole to the very letter has been verified; that they *have* lost the standing they so long held as the church of the living God; that unwilling banishment from the land of their fathers has for ages been their portion, and that they have not only been doomed to wander as outcasts over the broad surface of the earth, but everywhere in their wanderings have been made to bear the mark of ignominy, and been exceedingly filled with contempt;—shall I doubt, when, on reading further in the same line of prophecy, I find it written in terms equally express, that they are to be re-united to the church of God, re-instated in their ancient heritage, invested with an

honour and a glory, which had no parallel even in *their* days of bygone magnificence—shall I doubt, that these intimations of coming events shall also meet with their exact and proper fulfilment? When I see that God has magnified his faithfulness in giving to the dark side of the prospective history the most literal and complete verification, shall I think so harshly of his character, or so meanly of the consistency of his prophetic word, as to suppose that he will not also verify to the letter the other and brighter side, but allow it to pass away into some vague generality? The Jew has found it to be no over-drawn or chimerical picture, but a most certain and appalling reality, that judgment was written against him in the oracles of God; and with this history of the prophetic past to direct our judgments concerning the prophetic future, we conclude, by whatever truth, by whatever consistency there is in these oracles of God, that the same Jew must be destined to know it as an equally certain and faithful reality, that he is written there also the subject of distinguished favour, blessing, and glory.

Taking, then, this safe and consistent principle for our guide—namely, that the fulfilment of what is already past, affords the best rule for determining the sense of what is yet to be fulfilled in the prophecies, which concern the Jews as a people—let us go to the word of prophecy, and endeavour to learn, from some of its clearest predictions, whether what we have now intimated is to befall this singular people in the latter days—what, in short, we may warrantably infer to be the most prominent features of their future history. To divide these into separate heads, is to a certain extent to break the chain of evidence, by which they are collectively substantiated; for the prophets seldom speak of the future history of the Jews with reference to its single points, but rather as a combined whole, embracing all or the greater part at one view; yet, for the sake of greater perspicuity and distinctness we shall consider the things predicted under separate heads, and these as nearly as possible in the order which they appear to hold in the word of prophecy itself.

I. Our first proposition, then, is, that the Jews as a people, shall again become the people of God; which of course implies, that they shall be converted to the faith of Christ, becoming in one vast body members of the Christian church.

In the scriptural proof of this point we shall not need to be minute, as the fact, at least of the *ultimate* conversion of the Jews, is universally admitted by those, who own the authority of the word of God. Yet, not to leave it without some portion of the evidence, which might be brought in great profusion to support it, look first of all, to what is written in our text. That the Jewish people, as one whole, are the subject spoken of and addressed, is manifest both from the words themselves, and from the distinction put between them and the gentiles in the second verse. Of them, therefore, it is declared, that "they shall no more be termed Forsaken, but shall be called Hephzi-bah, (my delight is in her,) for the Lord shall delight in them." Their past history tells but too plainly, that they have been forsaken, and why—even for rejecting the promised Messiah, the true hope of Israel; and

their future history, we are here assured, shall not less distinctly prove that they shall again become the object of peculiar favour and delight, which every believer in the gospel knows can only be verified by their receiving Him, whom their fathers disowned and crucified.

Turn from this to the first chapter of Hosea, and in the two last verses you will find the same thing predicted in terms the most clear and explicit. "The number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured: and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, 'Ye are not my people,' there it shall be said unto them, 'Ye are the sons of the living God.' Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land." There is no possible room here for mistaking, who are the proper objects of the prophecy, as they are spoken of under the names of "the children of Judah and the children of Israel," the two distinctive branches of the Jewish nation, comprehending the whole

natural seed of Israel—and of them, of whom it had been said, in the verse immediately preceding, (we know how truly,) that for a time they were not to be the people of God, it is now most plainly testified, that they shall again become the sons of the living God, and after being gathered together from their dispersions, shall appoint themselves one head—and this head, who but the Son of David, the true Shepherd of the sheep, for rejecting whom they have been so long scattered as sheep having no shepherd?*

* It is not, and indeed could not, be denied by any Christian divines, that this passage in Hosea intimates the future conversion of the Jews; but it has been very often interpreted, and by some of our most approved commentators, as if it had no *special* reference to them, but only included them along with the gentiles, as having equally been at one period of their history "not God's people," and equally also destined to be at a future period, "the sons of the living God." And in proof of this, the application made of the prophecy by the apostles Peter (I Pet. ii. 10,) and Paul, (Rom. ix. 24–26,) is adduced as conclusive. Peter, however, does not cite the prediction as one, which had received its full or proper accomplishment in the calling of the gentiles to the knowledge of the truth, but simply adopts the expressions of the prophet as aptly describing the change which had passed over their condition, running, according to his custom,

The same prospective facts in Jewish history are disclosed in terms equally clear and decisive, in the last two verses of the third chapter of this prophet. "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: Afterward shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord

into natural and appropriate use of Old Testament scripture, and not, like Paul expressly citing it. The application made of the prophecy by the latter apostle certainly implies, that it might be extended so as to embrace the gentiles, since the apostle couples it with ch. ii. 23, to show that it was the intention of God to have a church formed indiscriminately of Jews and gentiles. But this does not militate against its primary and proper application to the Jews, and should rather be regarded as an extension of its meaning beyond the literal and primary import—a fulfilment of it in the spiritual sense; that is to say, an exemplification is produced of the general principle contained in it (not my people—my people) in regard to objects different from those chiefly and originally contemplated in the prophecy. That the apostle did not consider it fulfilled, in the proper sense of the term, by the events which took place at the commencement of the Gospel, we may certainly

and his goodness in the latter days." This is one of the most remarkable predictions in all Scripture, considering at once the extraordinary nature of the events which it foretells, and the length of time it foretold them, before they began to be accomplished. Contrary, not only to the state of things which existed in the time of Hosea, but to all probability, and to what has ever been realized in the history of any other nation upon the face of the earth, the prophet foretold, and that eight centuries before it began to take effect, that the Jewish people should

infer from the use he makes of another prophecy in ch. xi. 26; where, to prove the future conversion of the Jews as a people, he brings forward the single text, Isa. lix. 20, "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Compared with the words of Hosea, in the last two verses of the first chapter, this is a very general prediction, and admits of being much more easily accommodated to the gentiles. Yet the apostle thought it so conclusive a proof for the ultimate conversion of the Jews, that he was not careful to bring forward another; how much more, then, may we regard the prediction in Hosea, in which both the words themselves, and the whole context speak so determinately of the Jewish people, as pointing in their exact and proper application to that people alone!

continue for a long period in the anomalous state of being neither worshippers of the true God, nor yet idolaters—destitute alike of the implements of a false, and the services of a true worship—possessed of no earthly head, to whom they might yield allegiance in the relations of civil government, and of no real or imaginary God, to whom they might give the homage of their religious adoration. You all know how literally and how long this strange anomaly has been verified—verified in *their* case alone of all the people, who ever have possessed a national existence in the earth. But the prophet, who has proved himself so worthy of confidence in announcing with divine foresight, this remarkable fact, must surely be not less entitled to credit, when he goes on to intimate, in the last verse, that the same people, who were to be found for a long period in such a state of singular deprivation, are yet to find an escape from it, by returning to seek the Lord their God, and David, that is, Christ, their king, and that they shall one day

become true worshippers of the living God, and partakers of his distinguishing goodness.

It is needless to multiply testimonies where the fact to be established appears so clearly incontrovertible, and I shall therefore only remind you further of the testimony, which the Spirit has given to the same fact in New Testament Scripture, by the hand of the apostle Paul, when in one place, (2 Cor. iii. 16,) he affirmed, that the veil of spiritual blindness, which has so long been upon the hearts of the children of Israel, shall be taken away, when they turn to the Lord; and in another, (Rom. viii. 26,) that all Israel shall be saved.

There is, indeed, no denying it—all are obliged to admit, that Israel, as a people, shall be saved—the only question may be *when?* The time when this return of the natural Israel into the bosom of the church of God shall take place, is by many postponed to such a late period as deprives them of all practical benefit which would grow out of the hopes we are thus permitted to cherish concerning them. They are looked upon as so peculiarly depraved, so

deeply sunk in intellectual and moral degradation, and especially as so riveted in alienation from the blessed truths of the Gospel, that no rational hope, it is supposed, can be entertained of their being meanwhile or by any ordinary means converted to the faith of Christ, and so, the era of their restitution to the state and privileges of God's people is thrown back to the very close of time, mingled up with the throes of the world's dissolution, and reckoned among the physical and moral wonders, with which the present constitution of things is to be wound up.

It is not my intention to enter into any minute inquiry regarding the precise period of the complete conversion of the Jews, either absolutely or in relation to the other important events predicted to take place in the latter days; but, to show the utter groundlessness of the supposition just referred to, I shall so far anticipate what I trust afterwards to make out to your satisfaction, as to state, that there are purposes to be served by the Jewish people *after* their conversion, which both presuppose the existence of a state of things substantially the same as at

present, and will require to be prosecuted through a considerable lapse of time;—among which purposes I shall only at present particularize this as one—that the Jews when converted shall be the main instruments of God in carrying forward and completing the conversion of the gentiles. This alone would justify us in placing the conversion of the Jews, if not the very first, at least among the first, of that long series of events, the evolution of which is to make up the glory of the latter days. And in regard to the supposed hopelessness on moral grounds of any immediate efforts to reclaim them from their apostasy, however commonly entertained, it is I venture to affirm not warranted, but rather discountenanced, by a proper consideration of the circumstances of the case.

In the Old Testament Scriptures there are so many clear and explicit testimonies to the truth of Christ's Messiahship, that we should have thought the rejection of him by a people holding these Scriptures to be the word of God, almost incredible, had not the palpable existence of the fact proved it to be otherwise; and their con-

tinued infidelity, in the face of such overwhelming evidences to the truth of Christ, in their own books and history, is one of the most extraordinary things of a religious nature to be found in the past history and present condition of the world. Possessing testimonies of such a nature and so peculiarly their own to the truth as it is in Christ, they manifestly stand on a vantage-ground, in regard to their prospective entrance into the church of Christ, which is held by no other people, who like them are "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel";—and if, notwithstanding, the probabilities of *their* conversion to the faith should appear much smaller than in the case of any other people, it can only have arisen, we fear, from their having been placed in circumstances and subjected to a treatment, which have tended to blind their eyes the more to the testimonies, which their own Scriptures contain to Christian doctrine, and confirm their dislike to the religion of the cross. How much this has been the case no one can be ignorant, who is aware how exclusively till of late their attention was directed

and their deference yielded to the puerile, superstitious, and often impious dogmas of Rabbinical learning—how much they have been left to imbibe their views of gospel truth among the corruptest forms of Christianity, as it exists in the Greek and Roman churches, overrun both of them with the grossest idolatry, the object of inextinguishable hatred to the Jew—how little they have been "sought after" for good, yea, how much they have been pursued with bitter and relentless malice, with cruel persecutions, with all manner of insults, mockeries and deaths, enough to have made them recoil with trembling from the very name of Christian. Placed in *such* circumstances, and subjected to *such* a treatment, what nation under heaven would have been disposed to enter the fold of Christianity? But let the frowning aspect of things toward them be changed;—especially let them be plied by the melting power of Christian kindness, and be induced by a well-directed system of pious efforts to peruse their own Scriptures, and to hear the truth concerning Jesus "reasoned out of these," after the example

of the apostles, and we doubt not there shall soon be found no insurmountable barrier between the faith of the Gospel and the heart of a Jew. Blessed be God! the change is not now to be commenced—the work is already in progress—and in the results which have been accomplished, we discern the harbinger of what still remains to be achieved. The dawn of a happier day for much injured Israel has begun to streak the mountains; the Spirit has returned to breathe upon the dry bones, and is here and there inspiring them with life; converts from the ranks of Judaism to the truth of the Gospel, lately so rare, are now to be seen in almost every city of christendom, many of them also teaching with enlightened zeal the faith, which they once sought to destroy; the felt insufficiency of a Jewish worship and a Rabbinical learning, is leading them in thousands to the pure oracles of the word of God; a general cry is rising amongst them for the bread of life; and we seem to hear on every side the chariot-wheels of providence advancing toward us with the joyful tidings—that the veil is now rending,

which so long has overspread the hearts of the seed of Abraham, and that the time is not distant when they shall again be called "the sons of the living God."*

II. Our next proposition is, that according to the word of prophecy, the Jewish people shall be restored to their ancient territory—the land of Canaan. It shall again become theirs, and theirs in perpetual possession.

In entering on the Scriptural proof of this proposition, we begin with again pointing to the plain and unequivocal testimony of our text. "Thy land," it is testified, "shall no more be

* That the facts of the case are amply sufficient to justify the train of thought pursued toward the close of the first head, will appear from the following extract, taken from the last report of the London Jewish Society. "They (the Committee) have received information of at least three thousand Jews added to the church of Christ; and they hope to obtain more correct and general statements of this kind from the consistorial authorities on the continent as well as other sources. Though such statements contain a mere register of baptisms, without reference to the individuals; yet the fact in itself is most important. In numberless instances, the individuals are known to your missionaries and friends as adorning the

termed Desolate; but it shall be called Beulah, (married,) for thy land shall be married." It is impossible, by any fair construction, to explain these words without understanding them to affirm the truth of our proposition. It admits of no controversy, that their land has been, and still is, a land which may emphatically be termed Desolate: being stripped of its ancient and proper occupants; and by this word of prophecy, it as little admits of controversy, that they shall be restored to possess it, and shall have their future fortunes so closely and perma-

Christian profession.—Our elder missionaries can look back to the time, when a believing Israelite was a curiosity: they can now behold companies of converts, some more and some less numerous, dotted over the whole continent of Europe: they can point to professors at universities—pastors of Reformed and Lutheran congregations—physicians, jurists, mechanics, tradesmen, eminent in the path of life to which God has called them, and adorning the doctrine of their Saviour in all things—and can thank God for this exhibition of his grace and power in the midst of Israel." The report also states, that there are not less than forty converts from the Jewish faith at present employed in making known the gospel of Christ, and that of the forty-seven missionaries or agents employed by the London Society, twenty-three are of the house of Israel.

nently linked to it, that it shall be in a manner wedded to them, and wedded so as not again to be divorced.

It is possible that some may be disposed to regard the conclusion we draw from this passage as somewhat weakened, at least, by the impassioned and poetical appearance of the language here employed by the prophet; but if you look back to the xi. chapter of his writings, you will find this fact of the restoration of the Jews to the Holy Land predicted, in language which has not even the semblance either of poetical structure or of figurative embellishment, but relates the coming event with all the distinctness and literality of a historical narrative. At the 11th verse he says, "And it shall come to pass in that day, (the period of the Gospel dispensation,) that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign to the

nations and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. Verse 15. And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea, (the Red Sea,) and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, (Euphrates,) and shall smite it in the seven (or rather into seven) streams, and make them go over dry-shod. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left from Assyria, like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt."

Every candid expositor must confess, that there is here predicted a return of the children of Israel to the inheritance of their fathers, which remains yet to be accomplished. There is no possibility of accommodating the language to the return from Babylon or to any other past event in the history of this people;—for, first, the time to which the event before us is referred, is manifestly subsequent to the coming of Christ, who is unquestionably the Branch foretold in the preceding verses as sometime to grow

out of the root of David, and in whose day the event in question was to take place; then, it is the whole house of Israel, of whom the return to Palestine is here predicted, Ephraim as well as Judah—the remnant of the ten tribes, who formed the kingdom of Israel, as well as of the two tribes, who composed the kingdom of Judah —a return which it is well known has never been accomplished; for the return from Babylon was confined with a few exceptions to the house of Judah, and even with them was so far from being a restoration out of *all lands*, that it could scarcely be said to reach beyond Assyria. And, finally, this predicted return is to be accompanied by signs of God's miraculous power and agency similar to those which attended their first deliverance from the land of Egypt; and in particular we are told, that the Red Sea shall be destroyed or dried up, and the river Euphrates divided into seven streams, to open a passage for the return of the captives. Nothing, therefore, can be more certain, than that the restoration foretold in these verses has not yet been carried into effect; but as the dispersion into all

countries, of which it is simply to be the recovery, has been, and still is, in full operation; so nothing in prophecy can be more certain, than that the promised restoration shall in due time meet with its full and proper accomplishment.

A few of the Old Testament prophets, you must be aware, lived and prophesied after the return from Babylon, and though the revelations communicated to them chiefly bore upon what was near, and touched comparatively little upon the more distant events, that were to be developed in the future history of their nation, yet we find one of them, not only predicting the same series of events, which were disclosed to us in this last passage from Isaiah, but employing also nearly the same language in predicting them. In the x. chap. of Zechariah, the prophet, after referring to the calamities, which had been made to alight upon the Jewish nation, goes on to intimate the purpose of God "to save the house of Joseph," (the ten tribes,) as well as "to strengthen the house of Judah," and at verse 10, continues thus, "I will bring them again

also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon, and place shall not be found for them. And he shall pass through the sea with affliction, and shall smite the waves of the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up; and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away." No one acquainted with the language of Scripture will doubt, that in familiarly naming "the sea and the river," as connected with Egypt and Assyria, the prophet speaks of the Red Sea and the river Euphrates; so that we have here again specified the wonders which Isaiah, a couple of centuries before, had predicted to be one day wrought upon these two waters in behalf of the returning Israelites; and we have, besides, the mountains of Gilead and Lebanon expressly mentioned as places, which are to be re-occupied by the saved remnant. I need hardly tell you, that these predictions have not yet been verified—the events were foretold as still future after the return from Babylon had taken place—and not only have no such won-

ders as those specified been wrought for the seed of Israel at any period of their history between that and the present time, but the mountains of Lebanon and Gilead, which lay, the one to the extreme west of the promised land, the other beyond Jordan, on the north, between the tribes of Gad and Manasseh, have never been inherited by the descendants of Jacob since the time of their first dispersion—the few, who returned from Babylon, having always been confined within much narrower limits. If, therefore, any future event in prophecy can be reckoned on as certain, we may assuredly gather from these words of Zechariah, that a restoration to the Holy Land, different from any that has yet been effected, is to have a place in the still undeveloped fortunes of Israel.*

* If any one will take the trouble of looking into any of our most popular commentaries, he will see, that this is not a mere supposition, but that some of the most pious and sensible divines have explained away all the speciality, which that text of Isaiah appears to carry toward the Jewish people, and have held it as simply applying to the general circumstances of the Christian church. It is nothing, that a forsaken people are spoken of and a deso-

But it would require hours of your time were we thus to particularize and dwell upon all the prophecies, which intimate a future and final restoration of Israel in all its branches to the long desolate inheritance of their fathers. The word of prophecy is replete with evidence of the fact, giving line upon line, and promise upon promise regarding it, as if in express anticipation of the apparent impossibilities, and much prevailing incredulity, with which it should be attended. We shall only single out a few of the principal ones for your private meditation. In

late land—terms that never could properly be applied to the church and people of God as such;—nor that Jerusalem is expressly named in the context as the peculiar city of the people discoursed of, and the people and city together contradistinguished from the gentiles: these arguments for a special and peculiar reference to the Jewish people, are looked upon as nullified by the poetical style in which the chapter is written, and especially by the subject of the prophecy being addressed under the name of Zion—the poetical designation, it is understood, of the church at large. That many things said of Zion may be extended to the church at large, is no doubt true —but that for the most part, if not always, these things are primarily applicable to the literal Zion and its worshippers, that is, the Jewish people, and only by way of

the first chapter of Hosea it is stated, that the place where the children of Israel were cast off from being the people of God, is the very same in which they are to be ultimately recognized as the sons of the living God—which, as it was in the first case pre-eminently Judea, so we may warrantably infer it shall be in the second. In Jeremiah, chap. xxiii. 5, it is written, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute justice and

inference to others, is what might be rendered manifest by a variety of considerations, were it not sufficiently established by the application already referred to in note, p. 410, which the apostle Paul makes of another text in Isaiah. The fact he there asserts is, that "all Israel (by which he unquestionably means the whole Jewish people) shall be saved;" and the prediction, which he brings forward as fully establishing this fact, is, "There shall come out of (rather, to) Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."—Zion and Jacob being manifestly regarded by the apostle as terms strictly and specifically applicable only to the natural Israel. Why shoud it be thought that there is not the same literality in the verse and chapter from which our text is taken, and in which the language employed is so precisely similar? And why not, indeed, throughout prophecy, when such terms are used?

judgment in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is the name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness. Therefore, behold the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, which brought up, and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries, whither I had driven them, and they shall dwell in their own land." Again, in chap. xxiv. 6, it is said with a particular reference to the house of Judah, "I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land, and I will build them, and not pull them down, and I will plant them, and not pluck them up." And to the like effect, in chap. xxxi. 5, but with more especial reference to the house of Israel, "Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria; the planters shall plant, and shall eat them as common things. For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to

Zion unto the Lord our God. Behold I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child, and her that travaileth with child together; a great company shall return thither." And for the certainty of its accomplishment all the nations are called in as witnesses, "Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, he that scattered Israel shall gather him, and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock.*

* Every one must be aware, how frequently the expression used in this passage of Jeremiah, of God's purpose to *gather* the Israelites from their *scattered* condition, occurs in the prophets. It is sometimes used without any special mention of the place where, or the manner how, they are to be gathered, but for the most part it is coupled with the expressions, which distinctly point out the land of their fathers as both the region in which, and the inheritance for which, this final reassembling is to take place. But even had no such additional expressions been used, we might with the utmost certainty have inferred, that such was to be the case from the simple intimation of a future gathering as opposed to a previous scattering. For what was this previous scattering, but a dispersion from the land of Canaan, so that

If you pass to Ezekiel, you will find many similar, and certainly not less unequivocal predictions of the same event, especially in the eleventh, thirty-fourth, thirty-sixth, and thirty-seventh chapters. Read at present only a portion of that contained in chapter thirty-seventh,

their dwelling might be any where excepting only in that particular region? And what, then, can the gathering again possibly be, but their return to this ancient territory, so as to have it once more for the place of their permanent abode? The principle, with which we set out, and the soundness of which may be termed self-evident, requires, that if in a prophecy, which is partly fulfilled and partly unfulfilled, the first part received a literal fulfilment, we are thereby constrained to regard the other part as destined to receive a fulfilment not less literal: and, therefore, if it be the language of prophecy that the children of Israel have been scattered from the land of Canaan, and are again to be gathered from this scattered condition, the prediction can manifestly be no otherwise fulfilled than by their being brought back to be settled in that identical land. Yet, plain and undeniable as this seems to be, it is not what we often read in the commentators. "Let all the distant nations hear," says Scott, on the last verse we have quoted from Jeremiah, "that Jehovah, who scattered Israel, would gather him again into his church, as a shepherd doth his flock into his fold;"—(and to the like effect in other places, where the same language is used.) Was it, then, from the *church*, that God scattered Israel? Cut off, indeed, and

verse 19th, where the prophet is commissioned to speak thus to the whole children of Israel: "Behold I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand.

separated from the church they have been by reason of their unbelief—and on that account scattered from the land of their fathers; but to be scattered from the church is certainly not the meaning of the scriptural expression, as the scattering there spoken of, had not only taken place centuries before they were separated from the church of God, but is invariably connected with terms, which exclude every other idea but that of their removal from Canaan. And if in that respect only declared to be scattered, it is evidently to pass from the literal into the figurative, and to corrupt the simplicity of the word of God, to say that the gathering, which stands related to this as its proper counterpart, is to be fulfilled by their reception into the spiritual fold of Christ.—The expression, it may be proper to add, is certainly used in John xi. 52, in a spiritual sense, though opposed to a literal dispersion—but it is coupled with words which render that quite apparent; "might gather them together *in one* (that is, into one body or society)" —an evident accommodation of prophetical language to a spiritual sense, but not therefore indicating the proper fulfilment of such prophecies as those above referred to.

And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all, and they shall no more be two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all." Verse 25: "And David my servant shall be king over them, and they all shall have one Shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments and observe my statutes and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant; WHEREIN YOUR FATHERS HAVE DWELT; and they shall dwell therein, even they and their children's children, for ever; and my servant David shall be their prince for ever."*

* In this quotation from Ezekiel, the language is so peculiarly definite and express, as completely to shut out the possibility of explaining the terms used, otherwise than by understanding them of a literal restoration; and we find even Scott, with all his leanings to the other side,

It has passed among many persons into a sort of general understanding, that the language of prophecy is so highly figurative and inflated, as to require certain deductions to be made from its natural import, to reduce it to the correctness and sobriety of ordinary discourse. But in disproof of a sentiment so dishonourable to the

speaking of it as "impossible to interpret the language of the prophet of any events, which took place before the coming of Christ, and yet it seems plainly to mean," he adds, "that the Jews should dwell in Canaan under the rule of Christ, from the time intended, through all generations to the end of the world." They are not merely to be united, according to the prediction, under one head, and incorporated into the same body—which might possibly have been understood of their conversion to the faith of Christ—but in this incorporated state it is expressly declared, that they shall form one nation—shall exist as such upon the mountains of Israel—shall inherit the very land in which their fathers have dwelt, and which had been given in covenant to Jacob. Indeed, the terms of that covenant alone might teach us the necessity of the restoration of the Jews, without any such fresh and explicit assurances as those we have been considering; for Canaan was to be given to the seed of Abraham by the line of Jacob, "for an everlasting possession." Gen. xvii. 18. How imperfectly this has been as yet accomplished, we may easily understand, if we only consider, that the whole seed did not dwell in the land for upwards of seven hundred and thirty years, and

Spirit of prophecy, and in itself so groundless, (for the grandeur of the prophetic style arose only from the magnitude of the objects presented to the prophetic eye, which it sought to clothe in befitting terms, but could never overreach,) we confidently appeal to the series of predictions to which your attention has just been directed. Can any thing be more plain and un-

that the utmost term, during which even the tribe of Judah possessed it, was one thousand four hundred and eighty. And that the Spirit of prophecy did not look upon either of these terms as at all fulfilling the provisions of the covenant, the Spirit has himself in another place plainly testified. "Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance; THE PEOPLE OF THY HOLINESS HAVE POSSESSED IT BUT A LITTLE WHILE." Isa. lxiii. 17, 18:—So far from being with any propriety considered "everlasting," it was only, in the judgment of the Divine Spirit, "for a little while." The chief burden, therefore, of the covenant with Jacob, in as far as it respected the land of Canaan, must be regarded as still prospective. And we may just add, that this precisely accords with the interpretation of the covenant as given also by Moses—for in the xxx. chap. of Deut. he clearly tells us, that a period of final return to the land promised to their fathers, and great increase there, and uninterrupted blessing, should succeed to the period of cursing, during which they were to be scattered and peeled to the utmost ends of the earth.

adorned than the manner in which these delineate the future prospects of Israel? Are they not conceived precisely in the same language which the prophets might have employed, had they been narrating transactions of which they were the personal eye-witnesses? And commencing, as all these predictions do, if not in fully describing, at least in plainly presupposing events which have already been accomplished—the judgments and desolations connected with the dispersion of the Israelites—is it to be credited, that when proceeding onward to the future, and depicting in language entirely analogous their complete and final restoration to their ancient territory, the prophets do not mean what their language imported? O unhappy Israelite, shall every thing be taken literally when a judgment is threatened or recorded against thee, but all transformed into figure the moment a blessing is promised or pronounced? God forbid. And as the return from Babylon was evidently prior to that to which these predictions refer, and in itself quite insufficient to fill up the wide and comprehensive terms in

which they are expressed—as the houses of Israel and Judah have never been united together since they were first dispersed, and never collectively restored to their native land, while both events are clearly foretold some time to take place, we cannot but rest in the conclusion, that there is a period yet to come, when the mountains of Israel shall be repeopled by the gathered remnants of the progeny of Jacob.

It is at the risk of fatiguing your attention by too long confinement to one topic, that I request you to listen to any further proof of what I trust you will regard as already convincingly established; yet, in a discourse of this nature, in which the subject under discussion is expected to receive in all its essential points the fullest hearing, it were improper not to advert, however shortly, to two points connected with this restoration of Israel to their lost inheritance, which strengthen still more the proof which has been adduced in its support. The first is the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple, alluded to in most of the prophets, but thus, in regard to the former, historically narrated by Jere-

miah, ch. xxxi. ver. 38, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that the city shall be built to the Lord, from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner. And the measuring-line shall yet go forth over against it, upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook Kidron, unto the corner of the horse-gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the Lord; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever." (See also Zech. xiv. 10; and, for the rebuilding of the temple, Isa. lx.) There *was* a certain rebuilding of Jerusalem after the return from Babylon, but not the one here described, as is evident both from the description itself, and from the closing declaration, which affirms of the city contemplated by the prophet, that it should never be "plucked up or thrown down any more for ever," which, it is well known, could be said of no Jerusalem that has ever yet been built.*

* As a proof how even the strong and masculine intellect of Calvin was misled by the taste for spiritualizing,

The other point referred to respects the alterations which are to be produced in the physical state and appearance of the Holy Land at the time of Israel's restoration to it. In Zech. xiv. 10, among other physical changes to be produced, it is said, that "all the land from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem (which comprehends

I may notice the way, in which he gets rid of the passage I have selected from Jeremiah, so as to avoid referring it to an earthly Jerusalem yet to be built. He is quite satisfied that the description given of the city cannot be accommodated to that, which was built after the return from Babylon—for neither in magnitude, nor in holiness, nor in perpetuity, could it be said to verify the language of the prophet. Therefore, he says, we must think, not of that Jerusalem, which was ultimately destroyed by the Romans, and in the outward structure of which God afforded to the Jews only some foretaste of that favour, which was intimated by the prophet, but of the heavenly Jerusalem, which was prepared in Christ, and in which all that was of an outward and earthly nature in the Old Testament church, received its proper meaning and fulfilment. It seems strange, it should not have occurred to so acute a mind, that to put such a construction upon the prophet's words, however good divinity it might make, derives from them a sense, which can be justified by no principles of sound interpretation, and might be applied, indeed, to extract from other portions of Scripture the wildest extravagances. When we read of a city to be

an extent of forty or fifty miles—the hill country of Judea) shall be turned as a plain, and it shall be lifted up and inhabited in its place;" which new-raised elevation, it would seem, shall be Mount Zion, "exalted above the hills," (Isa. ch. ii. 2,) as a proper site, for the Lord's house. In many places it is declared, that the whole

built, which has not merely a name familiarly known to us, but also a local habitation, with well-defined boundaries, which if not all precisely ascertained, are yet certainly known to belong to a particular region, it is impossible in fairness to think of any city as designed, but one, which is of material and earthly formation. And when it is said of this city that it should never be plucked up or thrown down any more, as contrasted with a pre-existing one of the same name and in the same locality, which *was* plucked up and thrown down, the inference is unavoidable, that a city must have been intended, which was to be of a like nature with the one which had preceded it. It would surely have been preposterous to say of the heavenly Jerusalem, that it should not be plucked up or thrown down any more—as if it had already shared that fate. A thing from its very nature incapable of sharing the fate spoken of by the prophet, could not possibly be that, to which his language referred, and consequently there is a terrestrial city yet to occupy the site, and be resplendent with the glory here described —described without the appearance of either type or figure.

land is to become most fertile and prolific with the finest productions of nature—producing the most luxuriant crops of corn and oil and fruits, (how unlike to its present state of general barrenness!)—that it shall be copiously supplied with refreshing springs, and, in particular, that while "all the rivers of Judea shall flow with water," "a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord (placed on the summit of Mount Zion) and shall water the valley of Shittim, (on the borders of the land of Moab,)" Joel iii. 18. This flowing fountain is also mentioned in Zech. ch. xiv. 10, where we are besides told, that it shall divide itself into two streams, "the one-half running toward the former sea, (the Mediterranean on the west,) the other half toward the hinder sea, (the Dead or Salt sea, toward the east)—and this latter stream flowing eastward till it empties itself into the Dead Sea, is probably that which has its course so fully delineated by the graphic pen of Ezekiel, chap. xlvii., and which is said to have the virtue of healing the waters of that unwholesome sea, so

that fish shall not only be able to live in it, but shall multiply exceedingly.* It is needless to

* I have said, that the river mentioned in Ezekiel is only *probably* the same with that referred to in the other prophet; and this is the only place, in which I have sought for even a subsidiary proof in support of any of the statements I have advanced, from the concluding chapters of Ezekiel. There are difficulties attending that portion of the prophet's writings, which peculiarly belong to itself and do not adhere to other parts of the prophetical Scriptures: and after giving to the subject a pretty full consideration, I feel constrained to confess myself unable to determine whether it is to be held as properly prophetical or not—whether it gives a delineation of events, which are actually to be realized in the future history of Israel, or a pattern of things, which might, and but for their iniquities would have been so. The special reason given for the communication of the vision, is one that leaves the matter in this point of view quite indeterminate: "Thou son of man, show the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern. And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, show them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings-out thereof, and the comings-in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the laws thereof; and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them." (Ez. xliii. 10, 11.) It is clear, therefore, that the primary design of the vision was to bring the Israelites to a humiliating sense of their

say, that these changes have not yet been produced, but for that very reason we conclude they shall be so at some future period; they are described with a plainness of terms and a

iniquities, and this design it aimed at accomplishing through the exhibition of a perfect pattern in regard both to the material structure of a temple, and the various institutions and services connected with it. Now, the question is, whether this pattern were a scheme of things, which at that particular period the Lord wished them to have realized, which, had it not been for their continuance in iniquity, he would have enabled them to realize; or a scheme of things, which is yet to be realized to the full in the future history of Israel, and only waiting for its accomplishment till ungodliness is turned away from them; or finally, a scheme of things, which was never meant to be taken literally, but has received its spiritual and proper fulfilment in the things which belong to the Christian church?

It is not my design to enter into any formal consideration of either of these suppositions, or to produce any array of the learned names which have severally given their support to one or other of them—but I shall content myself with subjoining a few remarks on each. Of the last it is enough to say, that it is perfectly gratuitous and arbitrary, there being not only nothing to countenance it in the vision itself, but an appearance of literality and minuteness of detail throughout, which entitles us at once to repudiate the idea of its being only a figurative delineation of spiritual things. But in regard to the other two suppositions, although much might be said in defence

minuteness of detail, which forbids us to understand them otherwise, than as the native import of the inspired language presents them to our view; and standing as they do recorded in a

of both, there are also difficulties connected with each, which in our present state of knowledge render it almost impossible for us to decide which ought to be preferred. If the pattern were not to be sometime realized in the actual history of the Jewish people, it seems difficult to account for the language in various places, appearing as it does to describe things which were prospectively seen to exist, the singularly minute detail of particulars, with which the description abounds, and the entirely new, as well as exceedingly circumstantial distribution, that is made toward the close, of the Holy Land. It is impossible to deny, that there is in these things what tends to beget the impression, that the delineations presented to us by the prophet, refer to events, which are to have an exact and literal accomplishment. And yet it is just as impossible, on the other hand, to understand how, seeing the events did not take place at any period during the Jewish dispensation, they can do so during any period of the Christian. Whether the temple here described be precisely the same in outward structure and the number of its compartments with that of Solomon, now lying in ruins, we have no sufficient means of ascertaining; but there can be no doubt, that both the temple itself and the whole ritual of service connected with it are described by the prophet—the one as adapted to, the other as simply consisting in, the Mosaic ceremonial—and if we are really carried forward by the vision to the bright

word, of which one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass till all be accomplished, their remaining to this day unaccompanied, is to the church of Christ a pledge for the faithfulness of God,

period of millennial glory, it seems utterly inexplicable why the scenes it pictures out to our view should be all engrossed with the forms, and shadows, and fleshly observances, which were imposed upon the church only till the time of reformation, and which were the proper badges of a church still in bondage to the elements of the world.

A distinction in this respect, has indeed been drawn between the Mosaic ceremonial and that described by the prophet, by some writers on prophecy, one of whom remarks: "that though the chief feature in the New Jerusalem worship shall be, as in ancient times, the sacrificed victim, it shall be used not now as a type of the future, but as a memorial of the past; and that, while there shall be a priesthood of the sons of Zadoc with their attendant Levites to keep the charge of the house in "its latter glory," there is no high-priest in the house itself; no veiled part in the sanctuary below; nor any day of atonement that he should enter once a year into the holiest of all."* It is certainly true, that these things are not expressly stated as belonging to the temple of Ezekiel, but there seems very little ground for imagining that they were purposely excluded—indeed, there seems pretty clear ground for inferring, that they were to have the same place in this temple of Ezekiel, which they had in that of Solomon. We do not read of a veil, separating

* Fry on Unfulfilled Prophecy, page 235.

of Israel's still future restoration to the land of their fathers.

If the strange scepticism, which has prevailed among many Christians and Christian divines

one sanctuary from another; but we do read of "the Most Holy place," or Holy of holies, (chap. xii. 4,) and the natural supposition is, that it was to be separated from the outer sanctuary by an intervening veil, as in the first temple. But if there was to be a Most Holy place, the natural supposition again is, that there was also to be a high priest to minister in it, and a day of yearly atonement on which his ministrations were to be performed. And in regard to at least a great portion of the sacrifices mentioned in the prophet, so far from being spoken of as simply commemorative, they are plainly described as expiatory—a remembrance is constantly made of sin, as in times of old, and the very same language used concerning them, which we find written concerning the legal sacrifices in the books of Moses. If, therefore, such things were all done away in Christ, as unsuited to the New Testament dispensation, even in its present state of comparative weakness, how can they possibly be found suitable when it has attained to its state of millennial glory? And, besides, there is another part of the prophet's description which seems utterly incompatible with that state of prospective glory; for if there be any thing more expressly affirmed and more frequently repeated concerning it than another, it is that the Messiah is to be the sole King of his church and people, seated upon the throne of David. But in the vision of Ezekiel, mention is made of a prince who can

upon a point, which is attested with such unequivocal plainness and remarkable fulness in the word of God, has rendered it proper for us to detain you so long in the examination of the leading Scriptures by which it is established, it is proper to add, as a further confirmation of what has been advanced, that there neither has been, nor is there now any scepticism upon this

by no possibility be the glorified Messiah; for he is spoken of as a man of flesh and blood, requiring an inheritance of land for the supply of his bodily wants, having sons who should succeed to him in his inheritance, and as a sinner lying under the same yoke of sacrificial observances, which was imposed upon the people. So that, if there be things connected with the vision, which give it the form and appearance of a prophecy, begetting expectations of events sometime hence to be brought into accomplishment, there are other things which seem, we might almost say, with still more conclusive certainty, to preclude the possibility of these expectations being verified; and with such difficulties on the one side and the other, our only wisdom appears to be to leave this portion of Scripture out of the discussion, which we now hold concerning the future prospects of Israel; as touching this point, it seems by reason of our imperfect discernment to utter an uncertain sound, and it should therefore neither be allowed to prejudice what other Scriptures clearly establish, nor be held as proving what they have left unsettled.

point among those who are more especially interested in it—the seed of Israel themselves. "In all parts of the earth," says a recent writer, "this extraordinary people, whose name and sufferings are in every nation under heaven, think and feel as one man on the great issue of their restoration—the utmost east and the utmost west, the north and the south, both small and large congregations, those who have frequent intercourse with their brethren, and those who have none, entertain alike the same hopes and fears. Dr. Wolff heard these sentiments from their lips in the remotest countries of Asia; and Buchanan asserts, that wherever he went among the Jews in India, he found memorials of their expulsion from Judea, and of their belief of a return thither." (*Quarterly Review* for Dec., 1838.) This belief and the desire connected with it, have not only continued to subsist, but have rather increased in strength, as we are assured by the report of many witnesses; and now, at the lapse of eighteen centuries since the time of their expulsion from the land of promise, the conviction is

almost universal among the families of Israel, not only of the undoubted certainty, but of the near approach of their final return, and prayer is constantly made in their synagogues that the Lord would be pleased to hasten it.

If it be inquired how, or by what instrumentality, this event is likely to be accomplished, we can only return a very general answer—it being the general method of prophecy, (would that it had been more carefully attended to!) to use *the utmost plainness in foretelling events, but the utmost caution in pointing out the means by which they are to be accomplished.* There can be little doubt, however, from the general strain of prophecy upon the subject, that the complete and final accomplishment of the restoration in question, shall both require and receive the immediate and signal interposition of Heaven—that it shall be begun by the Jews themselves, prompted simply, it may be, by their longing desire to obtain the fulfilment of the prophecies, on which God has caused them to hope, but shall be opposed by the united councils and collective strength of many nations,

leagued together by a common spirit of avowed hostility to the cause of God, as well as of determined opposition to the wishes of his ancient people—that in the desperate struggle, which shall ensue, the Lord will interpose his Almighty arm, in a manner which it might be presumptuous to attempt now to particularize, but which shall have the effect of confounding with signal overthrow the designs of these ungodly adversaries of Zion, and of establishing the seed of Jacob in secure and undisturbed possession of their ancient territory. It seems unquestionable, that however silent and gradual the restoration of Israel may be in its commencement, and however certain as to its final issue, it shall be effected amid judgments of the most terrible and appalling nature; nay, there are the strongest reasons to believe that it shall be preceded by a conflict, such as has never been fought, and a season of affliction such as has never been experienced upon the earth. (Dan. xii. 1; Joel iii.; Zech. xiv.) That nations, as nations, shall both league themselves against the fulfilment of this purpose of God, in behalf

of the Jews, and suffer the most fearful judgments for their opposition, is written with the utmost plainness; whether any nations, as such, shall take part with them, is not so expressly declared as to be made the matter either of confident affirmation or of positive denial; but there can be no doubt that as God will be much displeased with, and sorely punish those nations who combine to prevent the restoration of his ancient people, so it is the duty of Christian nations to be preparing the way for their return; instead of "helping forward the affliction," to favour the well-grounded prospects of the scattered remnant. Do you ask how this may be done?—Simply by promoting, as much as possible, the work of their conversion. There may, indeed, be room to doubt whether the *entire* conversion of the Jewish people shall have taken place before the era of their restoration, or something in this respect may still remain to be done through means of the supernatural events which that era shall develop; but that at least the greater part of them shall have previously embraced the faith of the Gos-

pel; nay, and that this general if not universal conversion shall be the prompting cause, the moral ground, which is to bring on the accomplishment of God's purpose concerning their restoration, may be regarded as in a manner certain, both from the grand resistance with which their return is to be met, being to come from the Antichristian faction, on whom the signal vengeance of Heaven is to fall; and from their "remembering the Lord in far countries" being assigned as a special reason for his remembering them to bring them back, (Zech. x. 9; Isa. lxv. 10, comp. with 2 Chron. vi. 37,) as well as their being brought, when they do come, to "the place of the name of the Lord of hosts," in the character of a present or holy offering to the Lord. (Isa. xviii. 7; lxvi. 20; Zeph. iii. 10.) To deal kindly, therefore, to blinded Israel, and press the work of their Christian enlightenment, is to bear them onward in a manner to the realization of their hopes; it is to fulfil the charge of the prophet, "Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people;" and doubtless

when the Lord shall arise out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth and avenge the cause of his elect, he will not be unmindful of those who have sought the good of ancient Israel, but will save them from the calamities which shall overtake the wicked.

III. We have now passed two most important stages in the future history of the Jewish people. The first in point of magnitude, and partly at least also in point of time, is their conversion to the faith of Christ. Many persons conceiving this alone important, are disposed to rest satisfied there, and think it somewhat over-curious to push our inquiries further. But if God has thought fit to reveal and promise more concerning them, why should we refuse to follow? If it was wise in God to bring into the prophetic record intimations of other events to be fulfilled in their future career, it must surely be proper for us to make ourselves acquainted with these; and we have accordingly found, that the restoration of the Jews to the land first promised to Abraham, and afterwards for many centuries

possessed by their fathers, may be just as confidently reckoned on, as an event in their future history, as their conversion to the faith of the Gospel. But, perhaps, some who are willing to go with us thus far, may be disposed to reclaim against going any further, convinced that any thing beyond must be unsafe and hazardous conjecture. Our reply again is, that if God has seen meet to reveal and promise more, why should we not endeavour to ascertain more? How, otherwise, can we acquit ourselves of the responsibility resting upon us as the keepers of God's prophetic testimony to the church? It is our confident belief that there *are* other things still written with all plainness concerning the coming condition of the Jewish people, and which we may expect with the utmost certainty to have a place in their future history. Of these, however, we shall speak very shortly, and shall embrace them all under this concluding proposition, that after they are converted and restored, the Jews shall exhibit in a manner the most pre-eminent and glorious, the fulfilment of the promise made to their forefather, when

the Lord said to him as the representative of his whole elect posterity: "I will bless thee, and make thee a blessing—and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."*

* Gal. iii. 16, may possibly suggest itself to some persons as tending to discountenance the supposition that the prediction here quoted has any special reference to the Jews, but that it has its fulfilment in Christ. A little reflection, however, may satisfy us that this is not the case. The apostle there asserts that "the promises were made to Abraham and his seed," and from the word "seed" being used in the singular, concludes that one must have been thereby intended, viz. Christ—not Christ, however, as an individual, but the whole body of which Christ is the Head, as he afterward gives us more distinctly to understand, when he says, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed;" so that the word "Christ" is here used as in 1 Cor. xii. 12, in a collective sense, as including the whole spiritual body of Christ. To this one body, that is, to the company of sincere believers in every age, whether under the Law or under the Gospel, the promises were made, and certainly neither Jew nor gentile can inherit any spiritual blessing out of Christ. But there is nothing either in such a declaration, or in the argument founded on it, to prevent us from taking the prediction quoted in the text in its most plain and literal acceptation, as referring pre-eminently to the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh. For granting that the word "seed" there also denotes Christ and his people as one great whole, knowing, as we do, the peculiar love which, for the fathers' sakes, is ever to be

With the future condition of the Jewish people are bound up the common destinies of the redeemed portion of mankind, and when the promised salvation shall have come to them out of Zion, they shall at once be put in possession of a glory peculiarly their own, and be honoured also to convey somewhat of the same to the other nations of the earth. The promise, that "in them all the families of the earth should

borne to that portion of the body of Christ which belongs to the natural Israel, we are warranted to infer, that whatever blessing might, through the instrumentality of Christ's spiritual body, be conveyed to the world, should be so in a peculiar and eminent degree by converted Israel—by that portion of Christ's church who were in a double sense the seed of Abraham. And not only so, but when the promise runs, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed," if we limit the latter expression, "in thy seed," to the spiritual progeny of Abraham, we must understand the former "in thee" of his natural progeny. For Abraham here unquestionably stood, and is addressed as the representative of his posterity, and we are unavoidably shut up by it to the conclusion, that whatever benefits may be destined to flow to the world from the church of Christ generally, a special and singular part shall be borne in the communication of these by the natural descendants of Abraham, when they shall have turned to the Lord.

be blessed," has never yet been properly verified—all the good, whether temporal or spiritual, which from time to time they have been the means of imparting to the gentile world during the period of their history which is past, has been nothing more than partial fulfilments of the promise—a few scattered rays merely of that unrivalled glory in this respect which is yet to be concentrated in them, and to emanate from them.

The conversion of the gentile world is dependent, to a certain extent, upon *their* conversion, and shall not be consummated till they have turned to the Lord: "For if the casting away of them," says the apostle, "were the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" Their rejection of the gospel at the first, was the occasion of its being offered in the manner it was to the gentiles, and through their instrumentality—the instrumentality of the elect and believing portion of them—the message of salvation was carried to the gentiles, and from among the gentiles a church chiefly formed. But

if this benefit flowed to the gentile world in spite of, nay, in some sense, in consequence of their excision as a people from the church of God, what may we not expect when, by their conversion to the faith of Christ, they shall be received again into the bosom of the church? It shall be, we are assured, "life from the dead," not merely, therefore—for we must take the words in their full and proper significancy—serving, by the spectacle of a general reception of the gospel on the part of those who have so long and so obstinately opposed it, to reanimate the faith and quicken the zeal of nations already christianized, but operating also to the certain and immediate conversion of those who had not hitherto been quickened from the death of trespasses and sins. How the return of the Jews into the fold of Christ may be destined to produce this glorious result, we cannot now perhaps fully understand. We can easily conceive, however, that the simple fact of their general conversion to the faith of Christ, known as they have been in all lands whither they were scattered for their hereditary and inveterate antip-

athy to that faith, will of itself be productive of a very deep and powerful impression in favour of the gospel, and in its moral effect upon the nations, may give rise to the most wonderful results. We can easily conceive, too, that the signs and wonders and unparalleled judgments which are to be wrought by the outstretched arm of God, when he sets his hand the second time to recover his ancient people, shall have a mighty influence in extending the boundaries of Messiah's kingdom, and that, as it is written, "the nations of the earth shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity which the Lord shall procure unto them." (Jer. xxxiii. 9.) But however much may be accomplished by these grand movements, the entire result shall not be thus obtained; there shall still be nations remaining in ignorance of the true God, and in alienation from his commonwealth: and "the remnant of Jacob," it is again written, "shall be in the midst of them as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass," (Micah ver. 7;) "and I will send those that escape of them into the nations, to Tarshish, Pul and

Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the gentiles." (Isa. lxvi. 19.)* Wherefore, as it was through their min-

* There is unquestionably a certain degree of ambiguity in this text, which makes it somewhat doubtful whether the persons spoken of as having escaped, and who were to be sent as ambassadors to the distant nations form a gentile or a Jewish remnant; but the more probable opinion, I think, is that which regards them as being of the later description. I subjoin the paraphrase of Frazer, (of Kirkhill,) as exhibiting the most natural view of the prophet's meaning in this verse: "As a king intending to levy troops, to which his subjects are commanded to repair from all corners of his dominions, so will I manifest the Messiah to the heathen nations, that they may believe on him, and be admitted as members into the true church. And I will send of the Jews, after their conversion and restoration, to the nations most remote and widely separated from each other; to the inhabitants of Tarshish eastward; to the descendants of Pul and Lud to the south; to the nations sprung from Tubal and Javan, northward; and to the islands and coasts of the sea that are most remote to the west; even to those nations who were always strangers to my revealed will, and were unbelievers respecting the Messiah, in whom my glory is manifested: and these Jews shall preach the Messiah who is my glory among the heathen."—Commentary on Isaiah, p. 340.

istry, that the life which is in Christ was first conveyed to the world, so through their ministry again much that remains dead shall yet be quickened; the most successful and honoured missionaries are yet to spring out of the root of Jacob; to them, even to the despised and de-

The only passage in the New Testament that seems to speak a different sentiment from that given in this paraphrase, and in the discourse, is Rom. xi. 25, where it is said, that "blindness in part has happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the gentiles be come in;" which is very often understood to mean that the Jewish blindness shall not be removed until the whole gentile world is converted. This, however, is to put a sense on the declaration which the apostle's words do not warrant. Hodge, after Storr, takes the word *fulness* in the sense of *multitude*—"Until the multitude of the gentiles be converted"—and adds, "It does not necessarily imply that all the gentiles are to be thus brought in before the conversion of the Jews occurs, but that this latter event was not to take place until a great multitude of the gentiles had entered into the kingdom of Christ." I have no doubt that this is the whole that the passage really imports; at the same time, I scarcely think it brings out distinctly the proper meaning of the word rendered *fulness*. Whatever may be the precise shade of meaning which that word possesses in the different passages where it occurs, it seems always to denote a certain completeness—the thing spoken of is, in the particular aspect of it referred to, represented as filled up or completed. And

graded Jews, many nations of the earth must yet be indebted for their spiritual enlightenment and evangelical glory; and in all the countries where they have been a curse, they are still destined to be found a blessing.

This, however, shall be but the commencement of Israel's honour among the nations. The

there is no reason to think it is used otherwise here. In a general or popular way, we may say that the apostle speaks of a multitude, but strictly and properly he speaks of a filling up or completing of the gentiles, in the respect considered by him, which was their conversion to the faith or standing in the church of Christ. At the casting off of the Jews, God revealed his purpose "to take out of the gentiles a people for his name," (Acts xv. 14,) not the whole gentiles, but a people taken out of them—an *elect* church—the members of which are to be a chosen people, called and gathered out of all kindreds and tribes and tongues. And the precise idea, as I understand it, of the apostle is, that when the purpose of God in this respect has been accomplished, when this elect body, to be taken from among the gentiles, has reached its completion, then shall the blindness of Israel be removed; then, in short, shall be ushered in that glorious era, when the church of God shall no longer be an elect church, standing out of the midst of an ungodly world, but shall comprehend all tribes and kingdoms, whether Jew or gentile, (Rev. xi. 15;) so that the sentiment, instead of militating against, may rather be considered as confirming the views we have advocated.

glory of the latter days is all interwoven with the peculiar standing, and even the local habitation of this singular people; insomuch that when Moses shuts up the long perspective view which he was enabled to present of their future history, we find him breaking out into a shout of triumph, in which he calls upon every nation of the earth to join with him, as personally interested in the good things which were in store for the favoured seed, to be brought forth when their warfare was accomplished: "Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people; for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful to his land and to his people."

In describing the peculiar or distinctive greatness and felicity of the descendants of Jacob, after they have been finally established in their own land, and every yoke of bondage has been removed from their shoulder, the prophets employ language, which cannot be understood otherwise than as indicating a state of things transcendently grand and blessed. Yet the kind of greatness and felicity described, is evidently

such as belongs to a people who are themselves still in the flesh, who tread upon a material earth, require the means of a bodily support, and engage in the services of an outward worship—of a people beautified, indeed, beyond measure with the garments of salvation, and resplendent with the glory of the Lord, yet still clothed upon with the mortality which is hereafter to be swallowed up of life, though that mortality coupled with a degree of health and longevity far surpassing what is now experienced by the present inhabitants of the earth. "They shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat; for as the days of a tree (shedding its leaves upon the graves of many successive generations) are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.—Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills

shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land, which I have given them, saith the Lord their God." (Isa. lxv. 21, 22; Amos ix. 13-15; see also Hosea ii. 21-23; Jer. xxxi. 12-14.)

There is no certainty or definiteness in language, if these Scriptures do not delineate a state of things to be enjoyed upon the visible surface of this earth, much changed and renovated no doubt, by men still dwelling in tabernacles of clay, and compassed about with the framework of a material nature, in its physical elements, at least substantially the same as at present. But though constituted thus, it shall be a state of things of inexpressible splendour and bliss—for Jerusalem shall be created a rejoicing, and her people a joy. *There* the voice of weeping shall no more be heard, nor the voice of crying. *There* shall be a city whose walls are

salvation, and whose gates are praise—the joy of the whole earth, the city of the great king. *There* a temple shall be reared, to which the glory of Lebanon and the most precious things of the earth shall be again brought, and which, as "the place of Jehovah's throne, the place of the soles of his feet," shall be hallowed by manifestations of the Divine presence exceedingly more glorious than were seen in that first temple, which, of old, covered the heights of Zion. And as Jerusalem shall thus be called the throne of Jehovah, the glory of all lands, so shall her people stand the first in dignity and office in the kingdom of Christ—*there* pre-eminently shall be the priests and ministers of the Lord, the seat of spiritual power, the centre of a blessed light and influence that shall radiate thence to the most distant regions of the earth;—participating in their glory, blessed in their blessing, all nations shall flow unto them, they shall bow themselves down at the soles of their feet; their seed shall be known among the gentiles; all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are

the seed which the Lord hath blessed. (Isa. iv. lx. lxi. lxv.; Psalm xlviii. &c.)

Such is a brief outline of the coming history of the seed of Israel, and the glorious consummation in which it is to issue. A thousand queries might be started on points of inferior moment, both at different parts of the line by which we have proceeded, and now at its termination—but these we do not feel it needful, and scarcely proper to discuss. It is only on the more prominent and important features of their history that we have reason to expect satisfaction in the word of prophecy—on the great events which are to befall them, not on the infinite variety of means by which these may be effected, or the collateral circumstances with which they may be attended; and if we keep our eye fixed upon those prominent and distinguishing lineaments of their history, we shall not need to be ignorant either of the hopes, which we are warranted to cherish, or the corresponding duties, which we are called to discharge.

We cannot but remark, in conclusion, what a

mysterious grandeur hangs around the name and family of the Israelite. Surpassing all the families of the earth, in the antiquity of his nation, in the long descent and honour of his lineage; he is destined also to surpass them all in the inheritance which lies before him of a still undeveloped blessing and glory. As he has gone down to the lowest depths of dishonour and shame, so shall he rise to the noblest heights of favour and enlargement; and though travelling now through the world, a reproach and a hissing, yet on him must the world itself hang in expectation for its promised restitution and final glory.

And when we contemplate them as thus passing from the highest to the lowest, and again from the lowest to the highest place among the world's inhabitants, what a testimony presents itself to our view of the importance and preciousness of the truth of a crucified Redeemer! Why is it that they have been made to fall into a degradation and contempt so singularly deep, and that their history for so long a period has been "written with mourning, and lamentation,

and wo?" It is because they crucified the Lord of glory, and repented not of their crime. But they *shall* repent. The time shall be, and is hastening on apace, when they shall "look to him whom they have pierced, and mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son"—when the veil being lifted from their hearts, they shall turn as one man to the Lord, and then, lo! their reproach is forthwith taken away, their shame is buried in everlasting oblivion, and because they are united to him who is the King of Zion, and have the heirship of that land where he sojourned, and lived, and died, they shall be made the head among the nations, and invested with paramount glory. Centuries of sweeping desolation must pass over their land, and they themselves be made a spectacle of ignominy and reproach, to witness the reality and the worth of a Saviour rejected. And to witness the reality and the worth of a Saviour, no longer rejected, but cordially received, the highest nobility shall be given to them, and their land, which is Immanuel's land, be replenished with

the utmost fertility and loveliness of terrestrial nature.

But while we read the striking testimony, which is furnished by the varied and wonderful history of Israel to the infinite importance of the truth as it is in Christ, let us not conclude without deriving from it a word of admonition and rebuke to ourselves. There is a retribution in providence, sometimes very slow and silent in its course, but not the less sure in its development, attendant upon any line of procedure, which runs counter to the obligations of holy principle—even though it be a line of procedure which serves for the execution of a threatened judgment of God. When the king of Babylon came against Jerusalem, and routed its armies, and burned its houses with fire, and carried its inhabitants away into captivity, he only executed the judgment written against it for the wickedness of its people—but because "his heart thought not so," because he did it all in the waywardness and pride of a towering ambition, his doings were made to return with fearful recompenses of evil upon himself, and both his family

and his kingdom became in their turn signal monuments of desolation and ruin. So, it is no more than the fulfilment of much-provoked and long-threatened vengeance, that the Jews have been so long treated with unmingled severity and hatred, have been so little sought after for good, even by the church of Christ, so cruelly, we may rather say, consigned to the spiritual blindness and deplorable alienation from all blessing, which their rejection of the Messiah has entailed upon them from the hand of God. But while these things have come upon them in righteous judgment for their sin, who will stand up to vindicate the church of Christ for putting forth her hand to inflict it? Nay who can tell how much she has curtailed her own inheritance of blessing—contributed to the weakening of her own arm, and the swelling of that flood of evils, which, for many a long day has been laying waste her condition, by the manner she has carried herself toward those to whom she must be yet more indebted before she can reach her full inheritance of glory? The day of judgment alone will disclose how much the church,

by pursuing such a course, has been forsaking her own mercy and lessening her dowry of divine grace and blessing; but assuredly it now becomes her as a church, and each individual among her members, to look back with shame upon the humiliating history of the past, and be stirred up to redeem the time, by manifesting a more Christianlike and brotherly interest in the spiritual welfare of the seed of Abraham, and to strive so much the more earnestly that so many centuries have already gone of careless and sinful neglect, in seeking, as helpers together with God to gather the dispersed of Judah, and restore again the outcasts of Israel. Remember, O Lord, thy covenant—plead the cause that is thine own.

PART II

THE PROPHETICAL FUTURE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

THE predictions respecting the natural seed of Israel had respect only to the past fortunes of the people, and their existing condition. So far, there is a general agreement, both among the Jews themselves, and among Christian interpreters, as to the import and fulfilment of the prophecies. But the matter assumes another aspect, when we turn from the past or present to the future. Here the greatest diversity prevails—not between Jews and Christians merely, but between one class of Christian interpreters and another. The Jews hold, and on *their* principles, indeed, consistently hold, that according to the prophecies of Old Testament

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Note.—Taken from a work entitled: "Fairbairn on Prophecy," written by Dr. Patrick Fairbairn when Professor of Theology in the Free Church College, Glasgow. The text is from the second edition, published in 1864. It was published in Edinburgh, by Messrs. T. and T. Clark, 38 George St., and re-published in America by Messrs. Carlton and Porter, New York City. The text here presented is taken from the Edinburgh edition, and is unaltered, except that references to previous discussions in the same volume have been deleted.

Scripture, they shall, as a people, be gathered from their dispersions by the Messiah, and restored to their ancient territory—that there the temple shall again be built, and its worship set up anew, after the handwriting of Moses—and that, as thus established and presided over, they shall stand politically at the head of all the nations of the earth. Such, generally, is the Jewish expectation; and there are not wanting, especially in the present day, evangelical Christians, who entirely concur with the Jews in their interpretation of the prophecies, and confidently anticipate, not only a restoration of the Jewish people to the land of Palestine, but also a re-institution of the rites and services of the law, to be performed in a Christian spirit, and frequented by Christian worshippers from every region of the earth. A much larger portion, however, concur only in so far as the national restoration to Palestine is concerned, along with a certain pre-eminence in honour and Christian influence beyond what shall be possessed by any other people in Christendom. And another portion of Christian interpreters—also a very

large one—deeming it impossible to divide, in the work of interpretation, between the national restoration of the Jewish people, and the re-establishment of their ancient polity and worship, reject the one as well as the other, and hold, that the proper meaning of the prophecies, in so far as they bear on the future of Israel, is to be made good simply by the conversion of the people to the Christian faith, and their participation in the privileges and hopes of the church of Christ.

Such, omitting all minor shades of difference, is the threefold view that prevails upon the subject, and which may be designated from the modes of interpretation on which they are respectively based, as the Jewish, the semi-Jewish, and the spiritualistic. In the Jewish, we, of course, include the first class of opinions maintained by Christian writers, not as intending thereby to disparage the Christianity of those who hold it, but because the view itself coincides in all its ostensible features with the distinctively Jewish one, and proceeds entirely upon the Jewish principle of prophetical interpretation. That principle is

the strictly literal sense of prophecy, the principle which insists on reading prophecy simply as history written beforehand; and whatever has been urged in previous portions of this work against that style of interpretation, is applicable in its full force to this particular branch of the subject.* The principle of literalism is not espoused in this extreme form by those who hold what we have called the semi-Jewish opinion; they are prepared to apply to Christ and the church of the New Testament every prophecy that is so applied by the sacred writers, or may admit, on similar grounds, of such an application. They think, that in the language of prophecy, what is said of Zion and Jerusalem, or of David's throne and kingdom, has to a large extent already received its fulfilment in Christ, or is in the course of doing so; and that every prediction couched in the terms of the Old Testament shadows, must be regarded, in accordance with the spirit of the

* By "previous portions of this work," the reader is to understand previous portions of "Fairbairn on Prophecy."

New Testament dispensation, as capable of receiving fulfilment only in a non-literal, or spiritual sense. But, at the same time, they are of opinion that many prophecies respecting the Jewish people neither require nor admit of any such modified application—prophecies which speak in so distinct, specific, and circumstantial a manner of the gathering of that people out of all their dispersions, and settling them again in their former haunts, with even more than their former glory, that it seems difficult, if not impossible to understand them otherwise than in the most obvious and natural import of the language. There are collateral considerations which appear in their judgment to strengthen the position which they occupy; but this aspect of the prophecies forms the proper basis of the view they entertain. So far, therefore, it also rests on the principle of literalism, though restrained within comparatively narrow limits, confined chiefly to what respects the land and people of the Jews. And the main point to be determined respecting it is, whether in the prophecies themselves, or in the mode of

applying them in New Testament Scripture, there is ground for maintaining such a distinction as it draws between this particular subject and the others, with which it stands, in the prophetic volume, so intimately connected.

The class of interpreters, who adopt the spiritualistic view, conceive that there is no valid ground for the distinction referred to. Taking up their position on distinctively gospel principles, and contemplating all that is written in Old Testament Scripture of gospel times primarily in a New Testament light, they apply *uniformly* one and the same rule of interpretation to the prophecies which bear on the future of the covenant-people. What it obliges them to hold in respect to the religion and the more distinguishing peculiarities of Israel, they feel constrained to hold also in respect to their land and polity. And in support of this view they are wont to adduce a number of particular passages, which in their plain and obvious aspect seem to abolish, along with other distinctions, those also of land and people, and to leave no room for any name or

commonwealth in the kingdom of Christ, but that of the one body, formed out of all people and tribes and tongues, which is knit together by the bond of a living faith and a common participation in the blessings of Christ's redemption. It is not enough, however, to produce a series of passages possessing this import; for they are met by a counter-set of passages on the other side, and in looking at the subject as so presented, the mind is apt to be perplexed and bewildered by what seems so many cross lights and contradictory statements. The question can never be satisfactorily determined, by being viewed and discussed in so isolated a manner. It must be seen in the light not of this particular Scripture or that, but of great fundamental principles—principles which may enable us to distinguish between Scripture and Scripture—between those parts of Scripture which relate to the *foundations* of God's kingdom, which fix and determine the *form* as well as the *substance* of things belonging to it, and those which, from being of a subsidiary nature, relate only to what may be fit

or practicable within the settled landmarks. Unless some distinctions of this kind can be made good, there may be no end to the controversy on the field of argument; and it is with a view mainly to the establishment of such a result, that we propose now to conduct the investigation. Several incidental topics will be left unnoticed, in order the more fully to concentrate attention on what we deem to be the great determining elements of the question.

I. With this end in view, we naturally turn our eye, in the first instance, to the direct teaching of our Lord and His apostles; for there, beyond all question, it is that we find the revelations, which are in the strictest sense fundamental as to all that is to distinguish the kingdom of God in New Testament times. What Moses was to the Old Testament church, Christ is to the New, though Himself as much higher than Moses, as the New is above the Old. And if the prophets under the Old Testament, from being in their position altogether inferior to Moses, and having only revelations by vision while he had them by direct and

open intercourse, could introduce no alterations in the *principles* or even *forms* of things settled by him,—if the last of them wound up the whole prophetic testimony in its direct bearing upon those to whom it was delivered, by charging them to "remember the law of Moses, God's servant, which he commanded to him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments" (Mal. iv:4):—if the prophets of the Old Testament stood in this subordinate relationship to Moses, how much more must they have done so to Christ? They were charged with no commission to interfere with any thing which the Mediator of the old covenant had ordained—to bring in no new rite, to establish no new relation—for even the kingly form of government was prospectively indicated and authorised by Moses; how much less, therefore, could any word have been given them, which was to have the effect of countervailing the principles, or modifying the constitution brought in by the unspeakably greater Mediator of the new covenant? Indeed, the consideration reaches farther than this; the conclusion de-

rived from it holds, not merely as between the prophets of the Old Testament and Christ, but also between those prophets, and the apostles of Christ; for the least of the apostles was greater than John the Baptist, who again was greater than any of the prophets; and the communications by the apostles (for the most part) were also open and direct, not by vision. Here, therefore, in the teaching of Christ and His apostles, must be sought all the essential principles which go to determine the nature, the constitution, and form of Christ's kingdom; or, to use the words of a canon formerly enunciated, "Every thing which affects the condition and destiny of the New Testament church has its clearest determination in New Testament Scripture." So that, where there is any doubt or uncertainty, it is by this later Scripture we are to interpret the prophecies of former times, not by the prophecies that we are to explicate or resolve the later and higher revelations.

What, then, is the bearing and import of this teaching of our Lord and His apostles on the spe-

cial subject before us? Is it such as to give us reason to expect a future restoration of the Jewish people, or a re-establishment of their old economy, as if something of importance for the church depended on it? Unquestionably, there is no explicit announcement to this effect in the whole range of historical and epistolary writings of the New Testament. The infliction of divine judgment upon the mass of the Jewish people, was very distinctly proclaimed by our Lord Himself, with the destruction of their city and temple, and the scattering of the community at once from the kingdom of God, and from the land of their fathers. But in not so much as one passage does he unequivocally indicate for them a re-gathering to their paternal home, or a re-investment with their former relative distinctions and privileges; far less is there any statement to imply, that the temple-worship should be again set up as the common religious centre and resort of Christendom. And in these respects the disciples are of one mind with their Master; they are equally silent upon the topics referred to.

It is true, there are a few passages which are sometimes represented as by implication teaching those things; but still at the most it is only by implication; and a very slight consideration of them is enough to show, not necessarily or certainly even that. When our Lord, for example, spake of a coming time, when the twelve apostles should sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. xix:28), there is nothing whatever to indicate (even taking it quite literally) in what region it should be—under what form of religious worship—or even whether as collected into one body, or distributed through several localities. Nothing on such points is either affirmed or denied in the statement. Nor, again, when foretelling the coming overthrow and the long-continued degradation that was to follow, in the memorable words, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled" (Luke xxi:24), was any thing said of a return to the ancient home of Israel, and its ritual worship, not even of a restitution of the old nationality. Jerusalem is ob-

viously to be understood not alone as a city, but as a city identified with, and representative of the Jewish people; and the word simply announces, that a bound was to be set to *its* down-treading on the part of the Gentiles—the ascendency on the one side, and the degradation on the other, were to terminate; but in what manner, or to what extent, was left entirely undecided. Manifestly, the treading down might cease by the simple abolition of the outstanding distinctions between Jew and Gentile, and the coalescing of the two on a footing of fraternal love and equality, without any collective national re-union of all the seed of Israel (which but partially existed, indeed, when Jerusalem actually *was* trodden down), or any restoration of the old religious ascendency and temple-worship. Nor yet, again, when in answer to the question of the disciples, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" our Lord said, "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power," was any thing determined as to the points now under consideration. For supposing

it to imply, that the kingdom was somehow and at some period to be restored, the question still remains, in what sense? To Israel in their natural relation merely to Abraham, or, as a spiritual seed? separate and alone, or merged with believers generally into the Church of God? in the land of Palestine, or diffused throughout the earth? On these points nothing whatever is indicated, while yet they involve the whole questions now at issue. It is nothing to say, that the disciples must have meant by Israel the natural seed and its political resuscitation; for through the whole of his earthly ministry, Jesus was ever using language, and language often far more explicit and direct than this, which they did not at the time understand. We have no more reason to affirm, that the sense in which *they* understood the words of Christ here was that also in which *he* employed them, than it was so when He spake of destroying the temple and raising it up in three days (John ii:19); or, when pointing to his crucifixion, he said, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me" (John xii:32). It was the de-

scent of the Spirit alone, which fitted them for entering properly into the meaning of any of our Lord's sayings; and the utter disappearance from their thoughts and language, after that event, of all reference to a national kingdom of Israel, separate from the Church of Christ, is quite sufficient to show how great a change their sentiments had undergone upon the subject.

This, however, is not all. It is not merely that in these fundamental teachings respecting the character and prospects of the Messiah's kingdom, there is the want of any formal and explicit announcement of either the national restoration of Israel to Palestine, or the re-establishment there, as in a religious centre, of a Jewish polity and worship; but that the want exists in connection with much that bore immediately upon the subject, and was fitted to call forth, or even to demand, some definite announcement regarding it, if such could have been made. Beside the careful reserve maintained by our Lord respecting it, on the occasions already referred to, when we turn to His parables, in which he indicated more con-

cerning the future of His church and kingdom than He could do in His direct discourses, we find Him presenting almost every possible aspect of its coming fortunes and destiny, yet without once conveying an intimation that any of them were to turn upon the separate nationality or distinctive privileges of the natural Israel. In some of the parables He spoke plainly enough of their opposition to the spirit of His kingdom, and of the certainty of their losing their place in it, notwithstanding that they might be called the children of the kingdom (Matt. xxi:28-46; xxii:1-14; Luke xiii:6-9; xv:11-32, etc); and in others He pointed to the corruptions which, in the course of time, should creep into the church, the troubles and difficulties it should have to contend with, the sure progress and enlargement it should continue to make, and the final issues of reward and condemnation, blessing and cursing, in which it should close (Matt. xiii:24-50; xxv; Luke xvi; xviii, etc.). But in not one of them is the least hint given of the prospective return of the Jewish people to a separate place and position in the

kingdom; nor is the distinction ever drawn as one destined to exist and work for good, as between people and people, land and land, church and church. The kingdom always presents itself as a unity, alike in nature, privilege, and destiny for its real members, with the world at large for the field of its operations—divided only in so far as it was to be composed for a time of the false and the true, and to have its issues at last in evil as well as good. After Christ, the apostles touch the disputed territory on every side, but still with the same studied reserve. The Apostle Paul, who had every inducement, from his official calling and circumstances, to speak in the most conciliatory tone of his countrymen, and who does, in one of his epistles, treat at considerable length both of their general fall and of the future recovery (Romans ix–xi), still utters not a word concerning thir separate position, their local habitation, or their distinctive worship, as if in such respects they were to differ, when converted, from the other members of God's kingdom. On the contrary, he represents their return simply as a recon-

ciliation with the one spiritual body, from which they are for a time cut off—an admission into the community, which, he plainly testifies, admits of no distinction between Jew and Gentile. With him the church in the future, as well as in the present—the church, through all its coming stages on to its consummation in glory, precisely as in the parables of Christ—is an organic unity, marred only by the false admixtures and the anti-christian apostacy which were for a time to corrupt its simplicity. Nay, the Apostle Peter, the apostle pre-eminently of the circumcision, in all his discourses and epistles after the day of Pentecost, seems equally unconscious of any distinction awaiting the race of Israel in God's kingdom—none excepting that of being by privilege the first to receive, and by calling the most imperatively bound to spread abroad its blessings. This may be said to be the one theme of his first epistle, as addressed, more immediately, to believing Israelites scattered throughout the cities of Asia Minor. And in his recorded speeches on the day of Pentecost, and after it, how entirely does Christ's pres-

ent reign, and his one kingdom of converted and saved men, take the place of what previously held such firm possession of his thoughts, the kingdom of Israel? The change is most remarkable. He appears, in the last interview with Jesus, along with the other disciples, making earnest inquiry about the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. But presently afterwards, when the Spirit has descended with his enlightening and elevating influences, he proclaims Christ as already "exalted to sit on the throne of David" (Acts ii:30); or, as it is again expressed, anointed by God, according to the terms of the second Psalm, and now meeting the opposition of ungodly men, which was there predicted respecting the Lord's anointed King (chap. iv:24-28). And when he points (as he does in chap. iii:-19-21) to the brighter future of the kingdom, he represents it as a future which Israel, indeed, by their conversion and forgiveness, might do much to help it forward, but which was by no means to be peculiarly connected with them—which, in its progress and consummation, was to bring not "the restoration of the kingdom to

Israel," in the sense formerly imagined, but "the restitution of all things spoken of by all God's holy prophets since the world began," the one grand universal restoration to order and blessedness. The sphere of the apostle's vision has now immeasurably widened, and though in no respect to the prejudice of the natural Israel, yet to the indefinite expansion of their peculiar privileges, and the enlargement of the kingdom so as to embrace men of every nation, and the round circumference of the globe itself.

Nor in the Apocalypse is there anything that can fairly be regarded as bearing a different import. It is true that in one passage there, in the sealing vision of chap. vii, the Israelites are mentioned, and twelve thousand from each tribe are represented as being marked with the seal of God. There is a class of interpreters who understand this of the literal Israel (including even Bengel in former times, and now Auberlen), and who regard the 144,000 thus made up as constituting the elect church from among the Jews, and the multitude without number, from every na-

tion, tribe, and tongue, in ver. 9, as the elect from among the Gentiles. This, however, is so utterly at variance with the whole style of the Apocalypse, and with the connection of this passage itself with what precedes and follows, that the opinion is rejected by many who in other respects adhere to the literal style of interpretation. If the natural Israel were really meant, then this portion of the book would form an exception to the general character of the Apocalypse, which ever represents New Testament relations and prospects under the imagery of those of Old Testament times. The temple and its courts afterwards mentioned, the city where our Lord was crucified, Sodom and Egypt, Jerusalem and Babylon, Mount Zion and Megiddo, the woman and the whore, are all used symbolically to indicate things and parties corresponding to what bore those names in earlier times; and it would be to mar the consistency of the apocalyptic style, and introduce the greatest arbitrariness into its interpretation, if the tribes of Israel were here to be taken in their natural sense. Nor would it accord with the symbolical

import evidently attached to these 144,000. It is against all probability to suppose, on the hypothesis of the literal reading of the passage, that precisely 12,000 of elect ones were to be found in each of the tribes specified. And if that improbability could anyhow be got rid of, why should only twelve tribes have been specified, and not thirteen, the actual number of the tribes? Is it to be conceived that, while each one of those twelve should furnish 12,000, Dan, the tribe omitted, should furnish none? The very omission of this tribe, so as to leave the historical number, twelve, and the precise squaring of this number, so as to make the twelve times twelve, multiplied by a thousand, shows that it is not the meaning of the letter we have to deal with, but the symbolical representation of a perfect and complete totality. This appears, also, from the object of the sealing, which was to stamp, with the sure impress of Heaven, "the servants of the living God," the Lord's people generally, as being through the Divine protection safe from the desolations that were to sweep over "the earth and the sea." The

sealed are manifestly the representatives of all whom Divine grace saves from the world-wide judgments contemplated in the vision; and hence quite naturally appear, during the process of the sealing, as made up of so many thousands taken from the tribes that historically composed the professing church. Not less naturally at the close of the process, when the act is completed, they present the aspect of a numberless multitude gathered from all lands. These reasons, drawn from the vision itself, which treats of the sealed company of Israelites, are still farther confirmed, and rendered altogether conclusive, by the subsequent reference that is made to the subject. In chap. xiv the Lamb is seen standing on Mount Zion with 144,000, the same sealed company "having His name, and the name of His Father (so it should be read) written on their foreheads." These are described in terms that can only be understood of the elect generally, not of a mere fraction of the elect. It is said of them that they alone could sing the new song, and that they were virgins, faithful followers of the Lamb, redeemed

from among men. They are, therefore, the saved; and appearing *as* representatives, forming an ideal number, and in a state of ideal perfection, they are also fitly called the first fruits unto God and the Lamb.

On every account, the conclusion seems inevitable, that the Israelites, in the sealing vision, must be understood symbolically, like all similar terms in the Apocalypse. And as this is the only occasion on which they are formally introduced into the vision of things to come, it remains certain, that the revelations given to St. John, are in perfect accordance on this point with what appears generally in New Testament Scripture. As for the view of Hofmann, whom Ebrard, and some British writers, follow, that the woman in chap. xii is simply the Jewish Church, and her seed that was to be driven into the wilderness, the Jewish people in their unbelieving and scattered condition, it is so palpably opposed to the whole spirit of the Book, and the general object of its prophetic revelations, that it needs no special consideration.

It thus appears, that in the teaching of our Lord and his apostles, there is nothing to favour either the Jewish, or the semi-Jewish view of the prophetical future. Amid much incidentally bearing on the subject of Jewish prospects, there is still no distinct announcement of the national restoration and settlement of the Jewish people in Canaan, or of the re-institution of their temple-worship. There is nothing whatever said to indicate, that such events may be expected in the history of the Christian Church, or that any thing depends on them for the advancement and welfare of Christ's cause in the world. Christianity as exhibited and defined for all coming time by its divine founder and his servants, acknowledges no such distinctions, and is silent as to any such prospects. And as the revelations that came by them, were for the church of the New Testament of a primal and fundamental character, it were to invert the natural order of things, and unsettle the foundations of sound scriptural exposition, if Scriptures of an older, and from the first only of a subsidiary kind, should be alleged in support of

an opposite conclusion. From the nature of things, they cannot be rightfully alleged. And the feeling of this, we have no doubt — however vaguely defined and imperfectly understood as to the principles on which it rested—the feeling, that the fundamental teaching of the New Testament was of the nature now described, and ought mainly to be regarded, was what led the Fathers with one voice (not excepting such as held the personal, millennial reign of Christ in Jerusalem), and all Christian writers, down to the seventeenth century, to reject as chimerical, the Jewish expectations both of a territorial restoration and of a revived Judaism. The feeling itself was sound, though it could seldom, perhaps, have given a satisfactory explanation of the grounds out of which it sprung, or made an enlightened defence of them.*

* Jerome, in his note on Isa. xi. 10-16, brings out what was undoubtedly the prevailing view among Patristic writers. He refers, in doing so, to certain Christians, whom he calls "our Judaizers," meaning the ancient Millenarians, who connected the things spoken of in the passage with the second coming of Christ, not as he thought should have been done with the first, and also understood

It is true, that Christianity itself sprung out of Judaism, and that certain things belonging to it, may be, not explicitly stated and announced, but *presumed*, on account of the place they had in former revelations, and it has been alleged, that the obligation to observe the weekly Sabbath is of this description, as also the right to administer baptism to infants. These both rest chiefly upon grounds and principles definitely settled in the Old Testament Scriptures; and are, it is held, substantially on a footing with the supposed distinctions in the prophetic future between Jew and Gentile, or the return to a ceremonial worship. Our answer to this is very short. If the points now under discussion were really on a footing with the things referred to, they must have been

them too carnally, while still they made no distinction in regard to them betwixt Jew and Gentile. And he winds up the whole with this canon of criticism, "Let the wise and Christian reader take this rule for prophetical promises, that those things, which the Jews and ours, not ours [but]Judaizers, hold to be going to take place carnally, we should teach to have already taken place spiritually, lest by occasion of fables and inexplicable questions of that sort (as the apostle calls them), we should be compelled to Judaize."

presumed as continuously subsisting; they must have been held to be integral parts of Chrstianity as well as of Judaism, and opportunity must have been afforded to maintain them, at least in substance. But so far from this, they were authoritatively set aside, and an insuperable bar laid by God's providence in the way, even of their formal observance. If anything could mark them as merely superficial and temporary distinctions, it was surely this. We hold it to be otherwise with the Sabbatical Institution, and the admission of children to a covenant-standing. These are no Jewish peculiarities or temporary expedients; they rest on primeval grounds of truth and duty, and enshrine principles which are interwoven with the constitution of man, and were inwrought into the very foundations of the world's history.

II. This latter point, however, touches closely upon another, to which we now proceed. We refer to the typical character of the Levitical dispensation. And our position respecting it is, that as the Israelitish people, with their land and their religious institutions, were, in what distinctively

belonged to them under the old covenant, of a typical nature, the whole together, in that particular aspect, has passed away — it has become merged in Christ and the Gospel dispensation.

That this holds good in respect to the *religious institutions,* distinctively and peculiarly belonging to the old covenant, was, till quite recently, admitted by, at least, all Evangelical Christians. The only party known in history to have disputed it, were the small and obscure Ebionite section of the early heretics, whom all credible historians represent as much more Jewish than Christian in their views. That men of evangelical sentiments, in other respects, should, in these latter times, have come to the same belief, maintaining the absolute perpetuity of the temple worship, and the certainty of its being again established for the benefit of all Christendom, we can only regard as one of those strange and bewildering meteors, that occasionally appear for a little in the theological heavens, and then pass away with the occasion that has produced them. The belief, we are persuaded, has gradually forced itself upon them,

as an untoward, but necessary result of the false principle of prophetical literalism, to which the writers of this school had eagerly committed themselves, before they distinctly saw to what lengths it would conduct them. The anomalous position, which they now occupy, cannot possibly last. Consistency will oblige them, either to abandon their Judaism, or renounce their evangelism; for, as we said before, that the evidence for the historical Messiah cannot stand with their principle of prophetical literalism, so we say now, that the fair and grammatical exegesis of New Testament Scripture, can as little stand with the Judaistic hypothesis that has sprung from it. By the one result, the prophetical testimony to the Messiahship of Jesus is destroyed, and by the other the foundation is subverted of the true relation between type and antitype.

The full proof of this can only be had by the establishment of a sound typological system, based on a close and comprehensive examination of the writings of both the Old and the New Testament. And as we have endeavoured to do that

elsewhere (in the "Typology of Scripture"), it is the less necessary to say much upon the subject here. Indeed, with plain and unprejudiced minds, the matter admits of a very simple and direct solution. We might put it to any one perfectly free to express his convictions, if, holding the Judaistic views now under consideration, he could have taken the part, which the Apostle Paul did, in respect to circumcision and the law? Could he have resisted the introduction of these into the church as a matter of life and death? Could he have said, as Paul did to the Galatians, when he heard, not that they *abused,* but simply, that they *used* them—heard merely, that they "observed days, and months, and times, and years"—"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth? I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain; Behold I, Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing?" Or, could he have declared the proper subjects of the law, to have been placed by it in a state of bondage, or under a schoolmaster, from which, now that faith

has come, they were set free? It is impossible—and a glance into the writings of those, whose views we are now discussing, brings us acquainted with quite another language. Hear, for example, Mr. Birks, "They (the legal sacrifices and services connected with them), were taken away, from constituting any part of the true atonement for sin, which our Lord was coming to effect by the offering of his own body on the tree. As symbols or sacraments, pointing to something beyond, and far higher than themselves, and as adapted for an earthly stage of man's being, they were always acceptable, when offered in obedience to God's revealed will. But when adopted by others, to whom no such command had been given, or viewed as having inherent efficacy, they were denounced by the prophets as dishonorable to God, and unavailing to man; and the refusal to impose them upon Gentile converts, when the gospel was sent to them, was only a further and plainer testimony against the Jewish perversion of them, as in the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah, by pride and

self-righteousness."* Must not this sound in the ears of a plain reader of Scripture somewhat like a travesty of its meaning? It was certainly not thus that Luther understood the matter. How differently did he write of the Judaizing spirit of the Galatians and apostles of Judaism? And Paul himself, did he simply *refuse to impose* the Jewish ritual of worship upon the Gentile converts? Or, when introduced, did he merely tell them, that it was only when coupled with pride and self-righteousness, the services became unavailing? but that as symbols and sacraments they were always acceptable? By no means. It is the services themselves he condemns—because, in the very observance of them, where there was no bond of custom rendering it difficult to break them off, he descried the clear sign of an anti-christian spirit; and the teaching which persuaded the Galatians to enter on their observance, he affirms to be "another gospel." The very existence of them anywhere, he considered a badge of servitude, and the things themselves are stig-

* *Outlines of Unfulfilled Prophecy*, p. 323.

matised as "beggarly elements." During the period appointed for them, they held the place only of temporary expedients—"shadows," but with Christ's coming, the "body" is present, and the shadows, as a matter of course, disappear. The whole system of carnal ordinances, he tells us in Hebrews, was abolished, not because of men's abuse of it, but because of its own *weakness and unprofitableness;* and he shows that they belonged to a priesthood and a covenant, which, according to Old Testament Scripture itself, were destined to be displaced, and now, he expressly declares, *were* displaced by the higher priesthood and the new covenant of Christ. In short, the question, as treated by the apostle, and as it should still be treated by us, is not, whether those cardinal ordinances might not be observed by certain individuals under the gospel in a Christian spirit? But whether they were in themselves altogether good? And especially, whether they were adapted to the genius of Christianity, and properly fitted to nourish the Christian spirit? To this, the whole tenor of his remarks gives a

decided negative, and we may say, an unqualified rejection.

Such are the plain and broad features of the subject, as presented by the apostle to the Gentiles, which it is impossible to explain away, without subverting the very principles of a right interpretation of Scripture. But they by no means stand alone. Our Lord's declaration to the woman of Samaria, in which he said, "The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father; but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipper shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him;" may be said to involve the principle of the whole matter. For it intimates, that the distinction of places as to religion was on the eve of abolition, and that worship rendered at Jerusalem would be no more acceptable to God than that given in the most distant regions. But to say this, was to ring the knell of the ceremonial law, which necessarily fell with the exclusive honours of the one temple and the one altar at Jerusalem. It thenceforth

ceased to be either binding or proper, though still it did not strictly die—but rather, like the chrysalis breaking its horny crust, and emerging into a higher form of life and beauty, was transfigured into Christ's form of doctrine, the new law of a spiritual Christianity. The same change was involved in the instructive fact connected with our Lord's death, when the veil of the temple was rent in twain; for this declared, as by an impressive sign from heaven, that the formal distinctions of the old economy were abolished at the very centre, and must thenceforth cease, even to the farthest extremities. From that moment, there was no longer, in the old sense, a sanctuary, and a holy of holies; the handwriting which had established such divisions till the time of reformation, was blotted out; the reformation itself had come, and the entire sacrificial system founded on it necessarily gave way. The change was still farther indicated in Christ's declaring, at His last passover, that He had greatly desired to eat it with His disciples, because now it was to be fulfilled in the kingdom of God (Luke xxii:16): that is, the

typical act it commemorated, was to be substantiated by the great redemption, whose commemorative rite must henceforth take the place of the former. Hence, in still farther explanation, the apostle Paul says, in 1 Cor. v:7, "For even Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us" (or, more exactly, For also *our* Passover, Christ, has been sacrificed), let us, therefore, keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." The meaning obviously is, that the Christian church now possesses, through participation in the death and grace of Christ, in the real and proper sense, what was only symbolically represented in the ancient passover and its accompanying feast. In another epistle also (Col. ii), he expressly affirms, that the other most distinctive ordinance of the Old Testament, circumcision, has passed into Christian baptism; so that those who through the Spirit have been baptised into the spiritual body of Christ, are the circumcised in heart. And if, as the apostle in the same place announces, the handwriting of ordi-

nances was in one mass, as in Christ's body, nailed to the cross and taken out of the way, there can be room for but one conclusion; namely, that for as many as look to that cross for salvation, the old ritual has for ever gone; and we may justly say of it with Luther, "Like Moses, it is dead and buried, and let no man know where its place is."

But what is thus said of the *religion* of the old covenant, as to its external form, is also said of the *people* on whom, in their elect and separate condition, it was imposed; they also in that condition possessed a typical character. As a chosen people, saved from outward bondage and corruption, and placed in covenant-relationship to God, they represented those who, when the true redemption came, should be delivered from all evil, and constituted members of God's everlasting kingdom. So long as that typical relation stood, the national distinction between Jew and Gentile necessarily continued—altho, as the time for its abolition drew near, a certain approximation was made to its removal, by the dispersion of the Jews through the Roman empire, and the constant ac-

cessions made to them by proselytes from the Gentiles. The way was thus prepared, by Divine Providence, for the change from a typical to an anti-typical election—that is, from an elect seed to an elect society; which began to take full effect as soon as the Christian church assumed an outstanding existence in the world. From that time we hear only of a precedence on the part of the Jew in the order of time—he stood nearest to the kingdom of God, and fitly had the first offer of its blessings; but he had no superiority in rank, privilege, or destiny. Again and again the apostle testifies, that in these respects, there was no difference; as in Rom. x:12, "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon Him;" Gal. iii:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female (these outward distinctions do not indeed cease, but they are nothing in a *religious* point of view), for ye are all one in Christ Jesus;" Col. iii: 11, "Where (*i.e.*, in Christ) there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, bar-

barian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all, and in all." And in Eph. ii:14, sq., where he speaks more formally of the constitution of the Christian church, "He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace." Here, plainly, the ground of separation or enmity, the law of ordinances, is declared to have been removed by Christ, for Jew as well as Gentile; it was, henceforth, no more obligatory upon the one than upon the other; and should have ceased as soon as possible to be even observed, in order that the intended oneness of the Church might be effected, and converted Gentiles might feel that they were "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Hence, in token of this complete fusion of races, and the consequent merging of the type in the anti-type, believers in Christ, generally, are called Abraham's seed (Gal. iii:29), Israelites

(chap. vi:16; Eph. ii:12), comers unto Mount Zion (Heb. xii:22), citizens of the free or heavenly Jerusalem (Gal. iv:26), the circumcision (Phil. iii:3).

It is to be added, that here also our Lord himself took the lead. He began to do so at a comparatively early period in his ministry, when on the occasion of the Centurion's remarkable faith, he exclaimed, "Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness" (Matt. viii:11, 12). So again, when He was told of His mother and brethren desiring to speak with Him, "He answered and said unto him that told Him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of My Father that is in heaven (or, as Luke, hear the word of God, and

do it), the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Here, precisely as in the rending of the veil for the ceremonials of Judaism, the exclusive bond for the people was broken at the centre: Christ's very mother and brothers were to have no precedence over others, nor any distinctive position in His kingdom; spiritual relations alone should prevail there, and the one bond of connection with it for all alike, was to be the believing reception of the gospel and obedience to it. Finally, the command given the apostles to teach and baptise all nations, with no further difference than that they should begin at Jerusalem and the Jews, though they were not to rest till they had reached the uttermost part of the earth, and preached the gospel to every creature—evidently implied the cessation of all outward national distinctions as having any recognised place in the kingdom of Christ. So that the apostle Paul, in the explicit declarations we have quoted from his epistles, only carried out, and in a more concrete form expressed, the principle already embodied in our Lord's announcements.

So far, therefore, as regards Israel's typical character, their removed and isolated position is plainly at an end: all tribes and nations are on a footing as to the kingdom of God—members and fellow-citizens if they are believers in Christ, aliens if they are not. But admitting this, may not the natural Israel in some other respect have the prospect of a separate and peculiar standing in the church! It was not simply to be a type of the future election, that they were anciently separated from the nations, but also that they might possess the reality of a present interest in God's love and blessing, and do special service for Him in the world. Why may it not be so again? It may, certainly, and, we have no doubt it will, in some sense, and in so far as may consist with the fundamental principles and relations of God's spiritual kingdom. But it should be well considered how far, in respect to that, the history of the past itself may warrant us to carry our expectations. Beside the typical character of Israel, the only ground of distinction that belonged to them, at least as recognized by God, was their re-

ligious position; they were the nation that held the truth, and, as such, stood apart from the idolatrous nations of heathendom. But when that distinction virtually ceased to exist by the mass of the people abandoning the truth, and espousing the corruptions of heathenism, the Lord held the ground of separation to be abolished, and addressed and treated them as heathen (Isa. i:1-10; Amos ix:7, 8; Ezek. xvi, xxiii). Or when it ceased on the other side by heathens renouncing their abominations, and entering into the bond of the covenant, the same abolition, though in a happier sense, took place as to any formal distinction. Never, indeed, was there anything properly distinctive and peculiar to Israel as a people, apart from their standing in the knowledge and faith of God; whenever this ground of separation was removed on the one side or the other, the distinction itself disappeared; the natural seed of Israel no longer dwelt alone. And justly so. For their election of God to a separate place, viewed in respect to the time then present, was no act of favouritism; it was simply the appointed means to a

great moral end; and when they were either no longer capable of reaching this, or no longer needed for doing it, it fell into abeyance.

Such was the state of matters viewed in respect to the past: And would it not be an anomaly of the strangest description, if now under the new dispensation, pre-eminent, especially for the freedom it has brought from outward restraints and adventitious distinctions, a kind of division were to be introduced, which had no existence even under the old? In the church itself of the Old Testament there was no recognised division; members of the stock of Israel formed its main trunk, and those who joined it from other tribes became merged in the common body; the separation was simply between this body and the heathen world. Shall it be otherwise now? In Christian times alone shall there be a recognised and abiding distinction *within* the church, between one portion of it and another? Even when the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ, shall the Jewish nation stand out and apart from the rest? Were it actually

to do so, *it would not be a continuation or a renewal of the past, but the introduction of an entirely new principle into the Church of God.* When the kingdoms shall have attained to the condition mentioned, they will be relatively in the very position occupied of old by Israel itself —they will be one and all kingdoms holding the truth; and if converted Israelites were still to stand apart from and above them, it would not be the same thing that existed under the law, but something essentially different—something foreign even to Judaism; how much more, then, to Christianity?

The only just expectation respecting the position of the Jewish people in their converted state—that alone which is warranted by the history of the past, or seems in accordance with the great principles of Christianity, is not that their singular and isolated place after they have entered the church, but that their entrance itself there shall enliven and refresh her condition. The receiving of them, says the apostle, shall be "life from the dead." Cut off, as they have been and continue to be, for their impenitence and

unbelief, they are, so to speak, in the condition of an amputated limb—lying in the bonds of death. And when animated anew by the breath of the Spirit, so as to become re-united with the living body of Christ, what else can the effect be, than that of sending a fresh impulse through every part and member of the body? How far this effect may be produced simultaneously or by successive stages, cannot be determined with certainty, and is of no moment as regards the general question. The apostle's language, in the eleventh chapter of the Romans, has been thought to imply, that the return of the Jews shall be in a kind of national capacity. And such may be its import, although it does not materially differ from our Lord's language respecting the calling of the Gentiles, when he says in Matt. xxi. 43, "Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." He spoke of the general result, in the comprehensive style of prophecy, as if the transference were to be begun and completed at once; while yet, we know from the history, it

took place in a quite gradual and successive manner. For anything we can tell, the reception of the Jews into the bosom of the church may also take place gradually, though it is spoken of as a single event. At the same time, from the close interconnection that subsists among them, it is likely to be accomplished in a much briefer period, after the work of conversion has somewhat generally commenced, than in the case of the Gentiles. And if the present scattered, yet separately preserved condition of the Jews shall be found, as we may well conceive, to hasten forward the blessed consummation, shall there not be discovered a sufficient reason for the providence that has so kept them apart? Their preservation certainly has been wonderful, and we can scarcely doubt is destined in the issue to work out more signally God's great purpose of mercy for the world. Their very scattered and peeled condition, bringing them into contact with so many nations, and making them familiar with so much suffering, may but render them the more thoroughly prepared, when the time to favour Zion

has come, to do the part of the great Evangelizers of the world. For through them the tongues of all nations would be hallowed to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ, and, speaking from the bosoms of such converts, and the depths of such a manifold experience, they would assuredly be tongues of fire. Were Jerusalem but effectually reached by the power of the gospel, every nation under heaven would be stirred; and then indeed "the remnant of Jacob would be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men."

But now, what we have affirmed first of the religion of the old covenant, then of the people, we must also affirm of the *inheritance*. This, not less than the other two, possessed a typical character in relation to gospel times: like them, it passed, when these entered, into something higher and better. And in tracing the connection between the new and the old things, Christ and his apostles make no difference between this and the two former

particulars. Christ himself came into the world as the heir of an inheritance, but it was the inheritance of the earth, as given up to Him to be delivered from the bondage of evil, and ultimately glorified (Psalm ii.) Accordingly, one of the first benedictions he pronounced in his sermon on the Mount, was an assurance to His people of an interest in this large inheritance, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." So, again, in the words he uttered in connection with the faith of the Centurion, the converts from every land are represented as sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God—sharing ultimately in their inheritance, as they had already entered into their faith. In like manner, the apostle Paul speaks of believers in Christ, not only as children of Abraham, but also as heirs with him according to the promise (Gal. iii. 29)—having a joint-heritage, as well as a common standing with Abraham. He even designates Abraham "the heir of the world" (Rom. iv. 13)—which can only be explained by his identifying Canaan with what it typically represented, in the same

way that Christ is called Abraham's seed (Gal. iii. 16), since in the immediate offspring the eye of faith contemplated the ultimate child of promise. In Hebrews xi. the patriarchs themselves are identified in their prospects of a future inheritance with believers in Christ; they are described as in their expectations overshooting the nearer possessions literally contained in the word of promise, and looking for the everlasting inheritance. And this inheritance, described by the apostle Peter as the destined portion alike of converted Jews and Gentiles (1 Peter i. 4), is also by him identified with the new heavens and the new earth, which the prophet Isaiah had held out in prospect to the church of the Old Testament, as the final resting-place from all their troubles (2 Peter iii. 13).

It appears, therefore, that the typical character which attached to the people and the religion of the old covenant, attached also to the inheritance—the land of Canaan; and that the transition to gospel times is represented as effecting the same relative change in respect to this as to the others. It is true here, as of the

people and of the religion, that the typical bearing was not the only one; immediate ends of an important kind were connected with the possession of the land, though they were never more than partially accomplished. But the typical bearing is the relation in which it stands to gospel times—a relation which it holds equally with the people whose heritage it was, and the ceremonial worship they observed. How, indeed, could it have been otherwise? The land was, in a manner, the common basis of the people and the worship—the platform on which both stood, and in connection with which the whole of their religious observances, and their national history, might be said to move. To except this, therefore, from the typical territory, and withdraw it from the temporary things which were to pass to something higher and better in Christ, were to suppose an incongruity in the circumstances of ancient Israel, which we cannot conceive to have existed, and could only have led to inextricable confusion. Viewed in the light in which we have presented it, all is of a piece; a common principle pervades the

relations of Old Testament times. The seed of Israel, as an elect people, placed under covenant with God, represented the company of an elect church, redeemed from the curse of sin, that they might live for ever in the favour and blessing of Heaven: and when the redemption came, the representation passed into the reality. In like manner, the religion of symbolical feasts and ordinances, which was imposed upon the people of the covenant, shadowed forth under various aspects the realities and consolations of the gospel; and when these were introduced, the other, as a matter of course, passed away—the type became merged in the anti-type. So, once again, the inheritance which was given for a possession to the typical seed, and was to be a visible pledge of God's favour, so long as they fulfilled the obligations of the typical calling and worship, served for the time to image the final portion and destiny of the redeemed, but now it also through the gospel has been supplanted by the earnest and expectation of a world where all is pure and blessed. Here, as in other respects, the past links itself with the

future, as the germ of a great and abiding reality, that was in due time to be developed. And precisely as the seed of Abraham was seen by inspired men perpetuating itself in the flock of Christ, and David in Christ Himself, so are Abraham's inheritance and David's kingdom to be regarded as having a prolonged and expanded existence in those of Christ and his people. There is the same principle in both. And, as a necessary result, the former relation of the Israelites to the land of Canaan affords no ground for expecting its re-occupation by them after their conversion to the faith of Christ, no more than for expecting that the handwriting of ordinances shall then be restored, or the relations of the ancient world, generally, shall return to their old channels.

However viewed, therefore, the expectations of which we have been treating seem destitute of any solid foundation. They are to some extent at variance with the fundamental principles of the divine administration in general, and especially at variance with the spirit and genius of Christianity. The fulfilment of them

would constitute, not an advance to a more perfect state of things, but a retrogression to what was essentially imperfect. The local temple, which formed the centre of the old religion, with its holy persons, and places, and seasons, bespoke in its very nature imperfection; since it implied, in respect to other persons, and places, and seasons, a relative commonness or pollution; so that the prophets themselves anticipated a time when it would be supplanted by something higher and better (Jer. iii. 17). The same kind of imperfection was inseparably connected with the idea of an elect people and a holy land; all lying beyond the hallowed circle being necessarily regarded as either absolutely or relatively impure. Perfection can come only as this circle widens, and embraces the field of humanity in its compass. It began, in a measure, with the believing Jews of the dispersion, carrying with them into heathen lands the lamp of Divine truth, and preparing the way far and wide for the day of gospel light. More properly, however, it began with the incarnation of Christ, the one complete, living temple of Godhead;

and it grows as the Holy Spirit that is in Him finds for itself a home in the bosoms of believing men. Wherever such are, there also are living temples, surpassing in real glory the magnificent but lifeless fabric that stood upon the heights of Zion. And it is the grand aim of Christianity to increase and multiply these living temples of the Spirit, so that they may be found in every part of the habitable globe. Its tendency is not to centralise, but to diffuse abroad; not externally to communicate an impression of sanctity, by the mere touch of particular localities, and the observance of stated forms, but internally to sanctify men by the Spirit of holiness, and through them, as vessels of the Spirit, to sanctify all places and all times. The true ideal of Christianity is realised only in proportion as this regenerative process is accomplished; and it were obviously a retrograde movement, if its free and expansive energies should be repressed by the local restraints of some particular region, or by having its more select agencies drawn from but a fragmentary section of the human family.

In what has hitherto been said, we have confined our attention, in the first instance, to the essential nature of Christianity, then to the typical character of Judaism, with scarcely any direct reference to the prophetical portions of Old Testament Scripture, beyond the terms of the Abrahamic covenant. It is to this, more especially, that the apostle Paul refers, when he treats of the future of the Jewish people in the epistle to the Romans. But neither in what he says regarding it, nor in the covenant itself, when rightly understood, is there anything to imply the restoration of the seed of Israel to a future and permanent possession of the land of Canaan. In reality it was never meant to secure, in any sense, the possession of Canaan to more than a select portion of Abraham's seed; as the successive limitations made among his immediate offspring to the more peculiar blessings of the covenant clearly shewed. It settled at length upon the children of Jacob, but only on the supposition (never more than partially verified) of their being collectively chil-

dren of faith—for otherwise they could not have been entitled to any blessing. And, as thus ultimately defined and fixed, it was in respect to the possession, no doubt, as well as other things, everlasting; not, however, as regards the *form*, but simply as regards the *substance* of its provisions. The form necessarily underwent a change with the coming of Christ, from whom everything in the future connected with God's kingdom takes its shape and character. He was Himself pre-eminently the Seed promised in the covenant; but, at the same time, unspeakably more than the seed primarily designated; it was now a seed embracing alike the Divine and human, and including as many as partake of the life of God. In correspondence with this, the possession becomes also unspeakably more than the old land of Canaan—it embraces the whole extent of a recovered and renovated world. And wherever there is found a soul linked in vital union with Christ, there also are found the essential characteristics of Abraham's seed, and a title to Abraham's inheritance.

III. But we come now to glance at what are more strictly the prophetical parts of Scripture, and we here advance the proposition that they contain nothing which, taken according to the real nature and intent of prophecy, is at variance with the conclusions already arrived at. That they contain many passages which formally announce the re-establishment and perpetual existence of everything distinctively Jewish, admits of no doubt. But when read in accordance with the fundamental principles of prophetical interpretation, the true import is in perfect conformity with the views we have unfolded.

1. For, in the first place, by one of the most essential of these principles, the predictions of the future continually took the form and image of the present or the past. Partly from the mode of revelation by vision, and partly from the necessary laws of the human mind, which the Spirit in His supernatural communications does not overbear, but leaves in free and unfettered exercise, there was no possibility of

avoiding such a leaning upon history in the anticipations of prophecy. The new can only be conceived of under the aspect of the old; and by the aid of known relations the mind is obliged to feel its way to such as may belong to other states and conditions of existence. Of necessity, therefore, the form in such cases is always defective, and an accomplishment that should answer the description according to the letter would, in the nature of things, be impracticable. This holds as well of the New Testament delineations of our still undeveloped future, as of the Old Testament delineations of what has now become our present or past. Take, for example, some of our Lord's descriptions of the coming bliss and glory of His people. Luke xii. 37, "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching; verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth to serve them;" xxii. 29, "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones,

judging the twelve tribes of Israel;" Rev. iii. 21, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne," etc. Of these and all similar descriptions of what is to come, no one needs to be told that they present only a shadowy representation drawn from known objects and relations upon earth, not the very form and image of the things hereafter to be realised. Understood otherwise, they would neither give assurance of the kind of felicity that is fitted to satisfy the desires of believers, nor would they be properly consistent with each other. And if such be the case with the prospective delineations of the gospel, how much more must it have been so with those which were given in the very age of shadows and symbols? Relatively, the people of those times were in the condition of children with respect to the better things to come, and these must either have been wrapt in absolute darkness to their view, or unfolded to them in a childish manner. In this form alone could they have formed any distinct idea of the coming

future; and whatever imperfections may have cleaved to the form, it still was what alone could enable persons in their circumstances to obtain some apprehension of the reality.

Hence as the dispensations of God toward His people varied, and assumed in successive periods new aspects and relations, prophecy also changed the form of its representations. Instances have already been given of this (Part First, chap. iv.), and we glance here only at some of the general features. The patriarchal age was distinguished by the Lord's condescending to select, for the world's good, certain more peculiar instruments and channels of blessing, and prophecy then spake only of the general relations amid which the purpose to bless should be carried into effect. In the times of David and Solomon, when the kingdom, after many struggles, attained to a united and flourishing condition, the prophetic future assumed the aspect of a king contending and conquering—a kingdom in Israel bearing down all opposition, and gathering people of every name under its sway —and a blessed people, having their interests

inseparably bound up with the person and fortunes of Him whom God had set upon the throne. But after the kingdom lost its unity, and the royal house of David was shorn of its glory, and the people themselves became peeled and scattered, then the spirit of prophecy, sighing amidst the mournful desolations, yet confident of the grace and glory still to be revealed, spake of this under the image of the removal of existing evils—of the reunion of Ephraim and Judah—of a reviving of the splendour of David's house—of the resuscitation even of David himself, to wield again the sceptre, in God's name, over a blessed heritage—and of the re-gathering of the scattered flock, to share in the peace and glory of His reign. How else could they have formed definite notions of the *nature* of the good in prospect? The existing evils must appear to be supplanted by the opposite good. Even the sorest of all their calamities, that which befell them at the overthrow of their beautiful city and temple, only served, in the hands of Ezekiel, for materials to picture out a

restored community more perfect and glorious than the past, under the image of a temple and city, manifestly ideal in their whole structure and arrangements, yet admirably contrived to give assurance of a coming future that should totally eclipse the brightest era of the past. In Daniel a still further stage was reached in the development of the prophetic future, and, in accordance with his peculiar position, an altogether different form was given to it. Placed by Providence at a heathen court, it is from the midst of the worldly interest, not from that of the covenant-people, that his prophetic outline of the future is given. It unfolds the relations between the kingdoms of this world and the kingdom of God, but contains nothing of the more internal relations growing out of the times of Abraham, or Jacob, or even David. And when he comes to designate the members of the Divine kingdom, the characteristics are drawn from the broadest ground. They are simply "the saints of the Most High;" and the kingdom itself, so far from being confined within the little

bounds of Canaan, comprehends all people, and nations, and languages, under the whole Heaven.

Taking, thus, the hue and aspect of the past—foretelling things to come, under the form and image of things which have already appeared—prophecy becomes comparatively simple as to its mode of interpretation and its leading results, if only (for there lies the chief difficulty) we can throw ourselves back to the position of those who disclosed it, and conceive of *their* relation to the future of the gospel dispensation, as we must do of our own relation to the still future dispensation of glory. Situated as the prophets generally were, it was quite natural, and, in a sense, necessary, that they should speak of the better things to come in language and imagery derived from such as were known and familiar to their minds, and especially that when disorder and confusion entered into the state of things previously settled, they should announce the recovery of what was lost, and the re-establishment on surer foundations of what had given way. This principle, in fact, pervades

all their representations, and must be applied to one part as well as to another of the materials of which their representations are composed. The prophets themselves make no difference. They speak as distinctly, in some places, of a separate nationality for the covenant people, as in others of the healing of what was internally disordered; of the erection of the temple, and the joyful celebration of its worship, as of a restoration to the land of Canaan, and a re-built Jerusalem. It must ever appear arbitrary to separate between representations which are manifestly one in kind, and, if either intelligible or consistent, can only be found so by being based on a common principle. To hold by the form in one part, and let it go in another, is to introduce absolute confusion, and surrender the prophetic field to the caprice of individual feeling or the shifting currents of popular opinion. Indeed, on any other principle than that we have laid down, the prophetic testimony respecting the future of Israel would be of the most contradictory and discordant nature; for sometimes this future is exhibited under the form of a re-

moval merely of the disorders that had crept into the old constitution of things, and at other times of the removal of this itself, on account of its inherent imperfections, in order that something better may take its place (Jer. xxxi. 31; Isa. lxv. 17; lxvi. 1-4; Haggai ii.7). In one class of representations the nations are spoken of as going to Jerusalem to join in the restored feasts and ritual of Judaism (Isa. lxvi. 23; Zech. xiv.); in another, the distinctive peculiarities of Judaism and the temple service are described as no longer distinctive but everywhere diffused, as when Egypt and Assyria are placed on a footing as to covenant privileges with Israel (Isa. xix. 21-25); or, when the sacredness of the ark of the Lord is said to be shared in common by all Jerusalem (Jer. iii. 16, 17);* or, when the most peculiar rites of the temple, such as the altar

* The explanation of the Rabbinical interpreter Jarchi of this passage is striking, and shows how far even he had obtained an insight into its real meaning; "For your whole community shall be holy, and I will dwell among you as if you were yourselves the ark of the covenant"—a spiritual and godly people now taking the place of the temple and the most sacred part of its furniture!

service, or the offering of incense, is connected with other countries, and even every region of the earth (Isa. xix. 19; Mal. i. 11). Ezekiel, writing when the heart of faith was prostrated by the fall of the house of God, seeks to reanimate it with the hope of a temple and a city incomparably more glorious and perfect than what had been lost; while John, living when the temple and all its forms were superseded, perceives no temple in the consummate glory of the New Jerusalem, with which his visions terminate. All, indeed, perfectly natural and intelligible, if they are understood to be merely the varying and imperfect forms under which men, guided by the Spirit of God, endeavoured to body forth, from their several points of view, the better future; but full only of discord and confusion, if their delineations are to be ruled by a prosaic literalism.

In this also, we have a satisfactory answer to the demand, that is often made for the same kind of events in the prophetic future of Israel, as have appeared in their past history. Both, it is alleged, must be on the same level, equally

outward and palpable in the one case, as in the other. If so, then the future in God's kingdom must itself be on the same level with the past; there must be no rise, no progressive development, Christianity must move in the same sphere with Judaism; the history of Providence, instead of ever advancing forward, must turn back to its old channels, and its movements in that direction must even have been more clearly descried by ancient seers, in the dusky twilight, than by apostles and prophets in the bright noon-day of the gospel. To affirm such conclusions, is to place the word of God in antagonism to nature and reason, and to set one part of its revelations in antithesis to another. For the prophecies that were to have their fulfilment in the gospel history itself, dying, so to speak, on the boundary-line between the old and the new in God's dispensations—for such prophecies, a considerable degree of correspondence in the very form, might justly be expected between the terms of the prediction and the manner of its accomplishment—as is often, though not uniformly found to be the case in the re-

corded fulfilments of the gospels. But when the work of Christ was finished, a higher class of relations entered; the Divine administration rose greatly beyond its former level; and, in so far as prophecy pointed to what should thereafter take place, we should no more expect to see it fulfilled after the precise letter of its announcements, than we should expect the fruit of genius in mature years to retain the exact type of its early promise.

2. Another essential principle in prophetical interpretation, is the primary and pre-eminent regard that is ever had in it to the moral element. This appears particularly in two ways. It appears, first, in those predictions which refer to different nations and people, by pointing more especially to the persons or communities composing them, the real subjects of moral treatment, rather than to the territories they occupied. It appears, again, in the conditional character of those predictions which contain promises of good things to come—these always implying a corresponding spiritual condition on

the part of those in whom they are to be fulfilled, and a failure or modification, according to the nature of that condition. Now, it is absolutely impossible to carry out this principle in the interpretation of many of those prophecies, which refer to the future of the Jewish people. For, in these prophecies, Israel does not stand alone, but in connection with the surrounding nations, who represented, in different degrees, the ungodliness and enmity of the world, as Israel was called to represent the truth and holiness of God. But in the light in which those nations were contemplated in prophecy, they are gone; as distinct and separate communities, maintaining an ambitious rivalry with the covenant-people, they are utterly extinguished; their very existence is numbered among the things that were. How, then, can the prophecies, which speak of either Israel's restoration to the land of Canaan, or their forming in that land the religious centre of a blessed world, be fulfilled according to the letter? It is not the naked fact respecting Israel, of which the prophecies speak, but of this as imbedded amid relations derived

from their old historical position. Their return, for example, to their ancient possessions, is described as being made, sometimes with the help, and sometimes to the confusion and overthrow of those, who formerly afflicted them: "They shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together; they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab, and the children of Ammon shall obey them" (Isa. xi. 14); "And this man (Messiah) shall be our peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when He shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against Him seven shepherds and eight principal men" (Micah v. 5; "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom" (Amos ix. 11, 12). To the same class belong also such passages as Zech. xiv. 16-19, and Isa. xix. 23-25, referred to under the last head; for the Egypt and Assyria spoken of as one with Israel, is manifestly not the mere territories,

but the people or kingdoms that had their seat of empire there; these it is who are represented as undergoing, at last, an entire change of relationship toward Israel, laying aside their hostility and joining her in brotherly communion. But the people mentioned in all these passages have disappeared from the stage of history; and neither the restoration itself of Israel, nor the events growing out of it, can be understood according to the letter of the description; in that sense, considerable portions of the prophetic Scriptures can have no proper fulfilment. And why, then, should the others be supposed to have? Why not understand them generally in the sense of prophetic delineations written in the language and imagery supplied by history? It is undeniable, as we have already shown, that prophecies were sometimes written thus, even such as found their fulfilment under the old dispensation; and it is in accordance with the nature of things to suppose, that what was *occasionally* done in predictions relating to Old Testament times, would be *constantly* done in those which foretold the better things of

the New. For, in the one case, it might have been dispensed with, but in the other, it could not; here there was no alternative—the prophets were obliged to avail themselves of the former things to depict those that were to come.

The prominence given in prophecy to the moral element in the other respect mentioned, confirms, still farther, this result. For, the prophecies now under consideration are all of the nature of promises of good things to Israel; and these God invariably hung, to a certain extent, upon the spiritual condition of the subjects of them; and the determinate thing in them was not the precise mode and measure of the accomplishment, but rather, the purpose of God to do good to His people, and to what extent they might look for His blessing. But the proper result was continually marred by their shortcomings and sins; and some, even of the most explicit prophecies of this description, referring to the return of Israel from their first dispersion, and their future prosperity in the land—prophecies that should have been fulfilled before the coming of Christ, had never more than a very

partial accomplishment. The prediction in Jer. xxiv. 5-7, may be specified as an example, since the Lord there says of the portion of the Jews that had been carried captive to Babylon, as contradistinguished from the other portion that still remained in Judea, that he would "bring them back to their land, and would build them, and not pull them down, and plant them, and not pluck them up." There are various prophecies of a like nature in Zechariah—as in chap. i. 16, ii. 4, where, after the captivity had in part returned, the Lord declared, that he had "returned to Jerusalem with mercies," that it should be "inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein," that He would Himself be "a wall of fire round about, and the glory in the midst." So again, in chap. viii. he renews the declaration, that he "was returned unto Zion, and would dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and Jerusalem should be called a city of truth, and the mountain of the Lord of Hosts, the holy mountain." That these and other predictions of a like kind, intimated what the Lord was ready to do for the people, and

what should have been found in the immediate future, seems quite plain; but the want of a proper sanctification on their part rendered the full accomplishment impossible; as in other cases, so also here, the natural had to bend to the moral—the promised good could only be so far realized as the people were prepared and fitted to receive it. In other words, it was not the natural Israel merely as such, but these as the seed of God, the church, to whom the promises were made; and the natural element in the thing promised, necessarily had its amount as well as form determined by Israel's relation to the church, and God's dispensations toward her. Even in legal times, it never was more than a secondary point, whether Canaan was to be the home of the seed of Jacob; what alone gave it importance, was its selection as the chosen theatre of the one acceptable worship, the religious centre of the world. And when no longer needed for this, what should we expect, but that the natural element in the prophecies referred to, should fall yet more into abeyance, and the moral, which has to do with spiritual

realities and abiding relations, alone become prominent?

We may say, therefore, in regard to the entire class of prophecies, to which the above examples belong, that from their very nature their fulfilment, according to the letter and form, could not be expected to be more than partial; but as to the substance it becomes complete, though only when the form has passed away. During the time that the temple and Jerusalem stood, and formed the centre of the divine kingdom and worship, the predictions, which were of the nature of promises, received a measure of fulfilment in the case of the true covenant-people to whom alone they properly referred. But from the moment that Christ was glorified, as the temple and Jerusalem lost their original character—as the Jerusalem and the temple, which thenceforth constituted the real habitation of God and the seat of worship, rose heavenwards with its Divine Head (Gal. iv. 26, Rev. xxi. 2), it is in connection with that higher region that we are to look for what yet remains to be fulfilled of the predictions. So long as God's

dwelling-place needed to have an outward and local position upon earth, it continued, according to the word of promise, to have it. He did, as he said, encamp round about it, drew towards it from every quarter his sincere and faithful worshippers, and rendered it a fountain of holiness and peace to the children of the covenant. And when Christ personally appeared, and brought in redemption, not for the sins of Israel alone, but for those of the whole world, while he did not take from his people a centre-place of meeting and fellowship with God, he yet shifted its position; he raised it from earth to heaven; and instead of saying, "You shall find me here," or "Go to meet me there," he said, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world, and to the uttermost bounds of the earth." So that Zion, considered in its higher and moral sense, as the seat of the divine government, is always a holy mountain, and Jerusalem, viewed as the centre of true worship and hallowed influences, abides still, and in higher perfection than before. Beyond the reach of violence or corruption, it cannot be removed or

pluckt up for ever; and the word stands fast, which assured the covenant-people of a perpetual residence of God in the midst of them, a home of safety and a fountain of blessing.

3. Another, and quite essential principle of prophetical interpretation, as of every species of writing which is accordant with truth, is that the mode of understanding its declarations must involve nothing absolutely incredible, or contrary to the nature of things. Under the terms now indicated we do not mean what may be designated natural impossibilities; for the whole work of grace, like the birth of Isaac and of Christ, is of that sort; it is above nature, and in such a sense contrary to it, that if the laws and forces of nature alone were to operate, it might justly be pronounced impossible. To the heart of faith such things are not incredible, because it takes into account the supernatural grace of God, which does what nature is alike incompetent and unwilling to do, by bringing to its aid a truly divine energy. But there are limits even to the operations of grace, and of the power of

God generally. There are things of a providential kind, which we may say God cannot do, as we say, in respect to his moral character, that he cannot lie. And no interpretation of the prophecies can be sound, which, when fairly and consistently applied, would involve the belief of such things being brounght to pass.

Now some things of this description, in our opinion, have already been specified in the course of our remarks, as flowing from that style of interpreting the prophecies, against which we contend. Such are the self-contradictory statements, which on this literal style are found in them (noticed at p. 94, sq.), since both parts cannot be literally verified; and such, also those, which presuppose the existence of states and communities that have altogether ceased to exist. These are spoken of, not in the general sense of lands or countries, but of corporate societies and distant races, standing in a known and definite relation to the covenant-people. In this respect the old condition of things referred to in the prophecies is gone; and gone irretrievably. But there are other things of the same

nature mentioned of the covenant-people themselves. Thus the prophecy in Zech. xii., which is commonly pressed as one of the clearest proofs of the permanently separate condition and restoration of the Jews in the latter days, implies the existence of the old organization also as to families; the family of David is represented as mourning apart, and the families of Nathan, of Levi, and of Shimei. In other prophecies of a like nature, the priests and Levites are mentioned apart, even the children of Zadok, as contradistinguished from the other priestly families, and every tribe in its own order (Isa. lxvi. 21; Mal. iii. 3; Ezek. xliv. 15, xlviii.) But all such internal distinctions have long since perished; the course of divine providence has been such as to sweep them entirely away. And from the very nature of the case, such distinctions, when once lost, can never be recalled; the revival of them would involve, not the resuscitation of an old, but the creation of a new state of things. So long as any prophecies were depending for their fulfilment on the separate existence of tribes and families in

Israel, the distinction betwixt them *was* preserved; and so also were the genealogical records which were needed to attest the fulfilment. These prophecies terminated in the Son of Mary, the branch of the house of David, and the lion of the tribe of Judah; but with him this, and all other old things ceased—a new era, independent of such outward and formal differences, began. Hence, we find the apostle discharging all from giving heed to endless genealogies, as no longer of any avail in the Church of God; and the providence of God shortly after sealed the word by scattering their genealogies to the winds, and fusing together in one undistinguishable, inextricable mass, the surviving remnants of the Jewish family. Now, prophecy is not to be verified by halves; it is either wholly true, in the sense in which it ought to be understood, or it is a failure. And since God's providence has rendered the fulfilment of the parts referred to manifestly impossible on the literal principle of interpretation, it affords conclusive evidence, that on this principle such prophecies are misread. In what it calls men to believe, it

does violence to their reason; and it commits the word of God to expectations which never can be properly realized.

The ground on which these remarks are made, holds also in regard to other predictions; for example, to that of Zech. xiv. 16, which speaks of all nations going up to worship every year at Jerusalem, and to keep the feast of tabernacles; to that of Isa. lxvi. 23, which affirms the same respecting the new moons and even the Sabbaths; to that of Ezekiel, chap. xl.-xlviii., which sketches a temple and city and a new distribution of the land, which by no conceivable adjustments can be brought within the bounds of the possible. It was never intended to be so; its aim was to unfold by means of the old external symbols and relations, freshly arranged and expanded, certain great truths and elevating prospects (as we have shown in our Commentary on that part of Ezekiel); and similar ends were aimed at in all the other prophecies of a like description. By being so viewed, it is true, they are rendered less specific in their meaning, and we can derive little infor-

mation from them regarding the precise arrangements and forms of things in the latter periods of the Christian dispensation. But then, it never was the design of prophecy to give us such information; this is the province of history, not of prophecy. It is the part of the latter to inculcate great principles, to lay open the springs of God's moral government, to awaken earnest longings and expectations regarding the good in prospect for the people of God, and indicate the greater lines and more marked characteristics of those spiritual movements on which the destinies of the church and the world are to turn. These are its leading objects; but for subordinate details of providential arrangements, we have no warrant to look to it, unless it be in exceptional cases, such as times of peculiar darkness or great emergency, to which they have usually been confined.

4. We shall refer only further—not to an additional principle of prophetical interpretation, strictly so called—but to a particular prophecy—for the purpose of giving what we

conceive its true interpretation. We have already done so, indeed, in another place (the "Typology of Scripture," vol. i., p. 416), but must present it anew here, on account of the bearing of the passage on the subject before us. It is the prophecy in Isa. lix. 20, 21, which, as applied in the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans, has been supposed incapable of explanation, excepting on grounds that necessarily involve at least the restoration of the Jewish people. "And so," says the apostle—that is, after the fulness of the Gentiles has come in, and the blindness is again removed from Israel, "all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." One not of the least difficulties connected with this passage is the change which the apostle makes on the words of the original. In the prophet, it is *to* Zion that the Redeemer was to come, not *out of* it; and He was to come, not to turn away ungodliness from Jacob, but "to

those that turn from transgression in Jacob." Such deviations from the words and scope of the original have appeared to some so material, that they regard the apostle here, not so properly interpreting an old prediction, as uttering a prediction of his own, clothed as nearly as possible in the familiar language of an ancient prophecy. A manifestly untenable view; for how could we, in that case, have vindicated the apostle from the want of godly simplicity, using as he must then have done, his accustomed formula for prophetical quotations ("As it is written") only to disguise and recommend an announcement properly his own?

We repudiate any such solution of the difficulty, which would represent the apostle as sailing under false colours. Nor can we regard the alterations as the result of accident or forgetfulness. They can only have sprung from design; and we take the right explanation to be this:—The apostle gives the substantial import of the prophecy in Isaiah, but in accordance with his design gives it also a more special

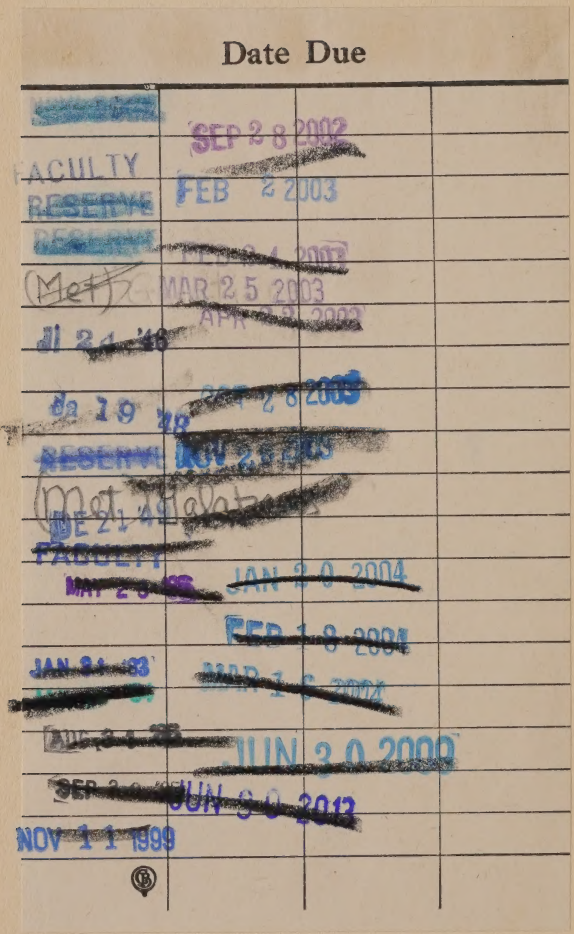
direction, and one that pointed to the kind of fulfilment it must now be expected in that direction to receive. According to the prophet, the Redeemer was to come *to* or *for* Zion—somehow in its behalf, and in the behalf also of penitent souls in it—those turning from transgression. So, indeed, he had done already, in the most literal and exact manner; and the small remnant who turned from transgression, recognised him, and hailed his coming. But the apostle is here looking beyond these; he is looking to the posterity of Jacob, generally, for whom, in this and other similar predictions, he descries a purpose of mercy still in reserve. For, while he strenuously contends, that the promise of a seed of blessing to Abraham, through the line of Jacob, was not *confined* to the natural offspring, he explicitly declares this to have been always included—not the whole, certainly, yet an elect portion out of it. At that very time, when so many were rejected, there was, he tells us, such an elect portion; and there must still continue to be so, "for the gifts and

calling of God are without repentance;" that is, God having connected a blessing with Abraham and his seed in perpetuity, he could never recall it again; there should never cease to be *some* in whom that blessing was realised. But, besides, there must here also be a fulness: the first fruits of blessing gave assurance of a coming harvest. The fulness of the Gentiles itself is a pledge of it; for if there was to be a fulness of these coming in to inherit the blessing, because of the purpose of God to bless the families of the earth in Abraham and his seed, how much more must there be such a fulness in the seed itself? The overflowings of the stream could not possibly reach farther than the direct channel. But then, this fulness, in the case of the natural Israel, was not to be (as they themselves imagined, and as many along with them still imagine) separate and apart; as if by providing some dispensation of grace or external position for them individually. Of this, the apostle gives no intimation whatever. Nay, on purpose, we believe, to exclude that very idea, he gives the

more special turn to the prophecy, so as to make it *out of* Zion that the Redeemer was to come, and with the view of turning away ungodliness *from* those in Jacob. For, the old literal Zion, in the apostle's view, was now gone. Its whole framework was presently to be laid in ruins; and the only Zion, in connection with which the Redeemer could henceforth come, was that Zion in which he now dwells, which is the same with the heavenly Jerusalem, the church of the New Testament. He must come *out of* it, at the same time that He comes *to* or *for* it, in behalf of the natural seed of Jacob. And this is all one with saying, that these could now only attain to blessing in connection with the Christian church; or, as the apostle himself puts it, could only obtain mercy through *their* mercy—namely, by the reflux of that mercy which, issuing from Israel, has gone forth upon the Gentiles, and has been bearing in their fulness. It is one salvation, one blessing for both parties alike, which Israel had the honour to bring in, and was the first to receive; but which they shall be among the last to receive fully.

Thus explained, both the prophecy itself, and the apostle's use of it, are in perfect accordance with his principles of interpretation elsewhere, and with those we have endeavoured to establish. And it holds out the amplest encouragement in respect to the good yet in store for the natural Israel. It holds out none, indeed, in respect to the fond hope of a literal re-establishment of their ancient polity. It rather tends to discourage any such expectation; for the Zion, in connection with which it tells us the Messiah is to come, is the one in which He at present dwells—the Zion of the New Testament church; *to* which he can no longer come, except at the same time by coming *out of* it. Let those, therefore, who already dwell with him in this Zion, go forth in his name, and deal in faith and love with these members of the stock of Israel. Let them feel that in such evangelistic work, the presence and power of the Lord are pledged to be with them; and let them do it in the sure conviction and hope that the conversion of Jew and Gentile shall happily react on each other, till the promised fulness on both sides is at-

tained. For this important work, and the animating prospects connected with it, they have sure ground to go upon; but for local changes and external relationships, they have none; and it is no part of the design of prophecy to lead the Christian church either to wait for such, or to work for them.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